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R E M A R K S

ON THE LATE

EARL of CHESTERFIELD's

LETTERS to his SON.

By WILLIAM CRAWFORD, M. A.

Maxima puero debetur reverentia.

JUV.

*Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem
Testa diu.*

HOR.

L O N D O N :

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R E M A R K S

THE

LETTERS OF



THE

LETTERS OF

P R E F A C E.

LORD CHESTERFIELD'S letters had been published a considerable time before they fell into the hands of the author of the following dialogues. His remote situation from the capital, and other circumstances, prevented him from having an earlier opportunity of gratifying his curiosity. As soon as he had procured the book, he sat down with avidity to read it; and after having run over the greater part of the letters contained in the first volume, most heartily joined with the public, in paying the noble

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author the tribute of applause, which he was persuaded, he justly merited. The graceful ease, and beautiful elegance of his style, the propriety of his instructions, and the persuasive manner in which he conveys them, afforded him a very high degree of pleasure; but before he had finished the last volume, his sentiments were totally changed: He discovered, to his great disappointment, that, his LORDSHIP, whilst he laboured with anxious solicitude to qualify his son, for making a figure in the world as a statesman and a courtier, and to embellish him with all the politer and more graceful accomplishments, exerted the utmost power of an artful insinuating

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ating address, to make him a libertine on principle, to corrupt his morals, and render him insensible to the exalted obligations of religion and virtue. A just detestation of an attempt so inglorious, so unnatural, so inconsistent with the duties of a parent, a christian, and a member of society, produced these dialogues. When finished, they were shewn to a friend, for whose judgment the author has ever entertained the highest respect, and by his advice they are now offered to the public.

Openly to attack a writer who was so eminently distinguished by dignity of station, his consequence in the political world, very remarkable external accomplishments,

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uncommon brilliancy of parts, and who in the present instance, is so highly admired by numbers of almost every class of men, may be thought to require some apology. But let it be remembered, that elevation of rank, knowledge, wit, genius, and engaging address, when prostituted to an unworthy purpose, and used as the means of injuring the noblest and most important interests of mankind, instead of intitling their possessor to regard, render him, in a peculiar manner, the object of disgust and detestation.

The very favourable reception Lord Chesterfield's letters have met with from the world, is, perhaps, the best reason that can possibly be given, for attempting
to

to exhibit them in their proper colours. For should the corrupt principles, recommended in these letters, universally prevail and produce their full effect, what would be the consequence? The laws would be deprived of their salutary power, the tenderest, the dearest ties of humanity would be violated, dissoluteness of morals would usurp the place of decency and good manners, and the British Empire, the glory among the nations, would be shaken to its very centre. This is an object which seems not unworthy the attention of even the legislature. But in these days of polite refinement, a becoming opposition to the sources of corruption, which every where abound, is not to be

be expected from those, whose station and authority give them the greatest influence. *Omnia in pejus ruunt.*

The encomiums bestowed on this publication, and the eagerness with which it has been read, afford but too striking a specimen of the prevailing taste. There was a time when instead of being applauded and admired, it would have been received with detestation and abhorrence. It must however, be allowed that in several respects it has some claim to our approbation. It displays parental affection, (abstracted from the views by which it is directed) in a very amiable light. It has innumerable graces of language, style, and manner, discovers in
many

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many places much ingenuity, and in all a thorough knowledge of the world. It contains excellent precepts of politeness and propriety of behaviour; and, frequently inculcates sentiments, that, considered in themselves, have a powerful tendency to warm and animate us with the love of virtue. But it is in these sentiments that the poison chiefly lurks. They serve to gloss over his Lordship's design of forming the finished politician, and man of the world, on the ruins of those divine principles, which alone can render any character worthy of esteem. They tend to mislead the understanding, to conceal the deformity of what is obnoxious, and give the reader a favourable opinion

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opinion of the whole, which otherwise he could not possibly have. Hence the Danger to which the heart is exposed of receiving from it, insensibly, the seeds of depravity and corruption.

Whether these Dialogues will, in any measure, answer the end designed, the author cannot say. As to Lord Chesterfield's greatest admirers, such as have contracted a habit of the fashionable vices of the age, to whose taste his letters are peculiarly adapted, he cannot suppose that they will think them worthy of the least attention. But may he not hope, that they will meet with a more candid treatment from those of less vitiated sentiments, and that they will not be displeased with this feeble

feeble effort to point out to them a rock, which threatens with destruction? Particularly, he would flatter himself that it may yet be of some use, in preserving the minds of youth, for whom it is more immediately calculated, from the contagion of his Lordship's licentious principles. Be the event what it may, when the awful moment arrives in which the springs of life shall fail, and the hand that now guides his pen, shall be about to crumble into dust, it will afford him some consolation to reflect, that he has offered up this small tribute to Religion and Virtue.

like the child to point out to the
a noble and virtuous man who
has been a faithful servant of the
state and of his country. It may be
of some use, in particular, to
those of youth, for whom it is
most immediately calculated.
It is the object of this work
to give a concise history of the
life of the great man, and to
show the manner in which he
has spent his time, and the
principles which he has followed.
It is not a mere eulogy, but a
true and impartial history, which
will be of great service to all
who are desirous of knowing
the life of the great man, and
of imitating his virtues.

D I A L O G U E S

B E T W E E N A

P R E C E P T O R and his P U P I L, &c.

D I A L O G U E I.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. **I** REJOICE to see you, Eugenius.
I hope you have spent the vacation agreeably.

Eug. I have indeed, Sir, spent it very much to my satisfaction.

Con. I know you have devoted a proper part of it to the improvement of your mind; tell me what Books you have read?

Eug. Among others, one has fallen into my hands which has afforded me not a little entertainment and instruction, I mean Lord CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS.

Con. It gives me concern to hear that you have met with that pernicious book, and still more that you speak of it in such terms of approbation.

B

Eug. Dear

Eug. Dear Sir, you surprise me very much, Lord Chesterfield's Letters are exceedingly admired, they are read so universally by every one of taste, that they have passed already through several editions.

Con. I know it, and with that inward pain which every honest man must feel, on seeing sentiments propagated, and received with favour, very prejudicial to the interests of mankind.

Eug. I hope, Sir, I have profited too much by the instructions I have received from you, not to reject with indignation any book that appears to me to have such a tendency.

Con. I am convinced you would from what I know of the dispositions of your mind; but I can easily account for any mistake which you and others may have fallen into with respect to this matter. Lord Chesterfield, if we only consider his manner, is certainly a most pleasing and entertaining writer; in particular his epistolary style is perhaps the most perfect model of the kind to be met with; the dress with which he clothes his thoughts, is so easy, polite, and elegant, that it is no wonder he should impose on many, more especially

cially the young, who are frequently less attentive to the justness and propriety of a sentiment, than to the manner in which it is expressed.

Eug. The graceful ornaments of Lord Chesterfield's language delighted, perhaps they have seduced me, and tempted me to give my approbation too hastily to opinions that will not bear the test of sober reflection. But as I know you are an enemy to implicit faith, and have ever taught me that it is unmanly and irrational for any one to acquiesce in an opinion which appears to him unsupported by the evidence of truth, I must take the liberty to ask you, what are the things you find fault with in the book we speak of?

Con. I have many objections to it, particularly I am convinced that no publication has appeared in the world for many years less friendly to religion and virtue.

Eug. If that is the case, I have indeed been much deceived, but if I am not greatly mistaken, it is presented to the world in a very different point of view.—I think the publisher expressly says, “that his L—ship, in order to accomplish the end he had in view in giving his son the means of instruction,

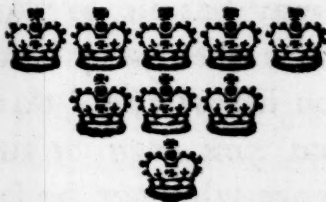
was ever anxious to fix in him a scrupulous adherence to the strictest morality, and to lay in him in the earliest period of life, a firm foundation in good principles and sound religion;" with this idea the Letters are warmly recommended as containing a system of education, which may be extremely useful to the community.

Con. The Editor has indeed said all this, and though a Lady, I must observe, with very little regard either to truth or modesty; whether her design in doing so, was tinged with selfish motives, or has proceeded from those kind wishes to her country for which she expresses so affectionate a regard, I believe the candid will find themselves at no loss to determine. Nor does it require more discernment to pronounce, that the rescuing these Letters from oblivion, to which it is said his L—p had consigned them, reflects much discredit on the memory of their noble author, instead of adding lustre to his reputation. — You will probably think that this remark is not very agreeable to the good-natured maxim, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*;" I must confess it is not; but when an attack is made upon that which is the distinguishing glory and excellence of human nature,
silence

silence would be unpardonable; here the political abilities, the graces and admired accomplishments of a Chesterfield should be no protection to him. For this reason I have thought it very strange, that no person properly qualified for the office, and animated with the love of virtue, religion and his country, has yet (as far as my information reaches) stepped forth to place before the public the tendency of his Letters in their native colours. As I find you stand in need of my assistance in this respect, I will take the first opportunity to enter with you more particularly on the subject. In the mean time I will carefully examine the Letters in question, that I may be able to place before you in proper order the exceptionable parts of them; do you likewise read them again with attention, that you may be the better prepared to advance what can be said in defence of your author. You know I have taught you to speak your thoughts without reserve, and in our inquiries after truth, left you at perfect liberty to judge for yourself. On the present occasion you shall enjoy all these privileges in their utmost extent. Our conversations on this subject I hope will not be unprofitable; I have no doubt but I

shall be able to remove your mistake with respect to L—d Ch——d's Letters, and the subject will naturally suggest to me some reflections which may tend to the improvement of your mind.

Eug. I shall most chearfully comply with your desire.



DIA-

DIALOGUE II.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. **D**URING the interval of our more serious studies, we have both had sufficient time to reflect on our late conversation relating to L—d Ch—d's Letters.—Agreeably to our mutual intention when we parted, I hope we are both prepared to resume that subject, and to consider it more minutely.

Eug. In obedience, Sir, to your commands, I have turned my thoughts with a great deal of attention to that matter, and shall with much pleasure receive your farther instructions with respect to it.

Con. To begin then with what is by no means the least weighty objection to the publication we are speaking of; I look upon it to be unfavourable to the interests of religion; I hope you are now convinced of the truth of this.

Eug. I

Eug. I cannot say that I am, and for these reasons. L—d Ch—d having observed to his son, that solid knowledge was the first and great foundation of his future fortune and character, says,* “ I never mention to you the two much greater points, religion and morality, because I cannot possibly suspect you as to either of them.”—In another letter he writes to him thus,† “ I have long since done mentioning your great, religious, and moral duties, because I would not make your understanding so bad a compliment as to suppose that you wanted or could receive any new instruction on these two important points; Mr. Harte, I am sure, has not neglected them, and besides, they are so obvious to common sense and reason, that commentators may as they often do perplex, but cannot make them clearer.” — I cannot think that the following are the sentiments of one unfriendly to religion.‡—“ When you happen to be in company with pretended *Esprits forts*, or with thoughtless libertines, who laugh at religion to shew their wit, or disclaim it to compleat their riot, let no word or look of
yours,

* 123 let. 2d vol. † 135 l. 2d vol. ‡ 180 l. 2d vol.

yours, intimate the least approbation; on the contrary, let a silent gravity express your dislike." — Does not this also seem warmly to recommend the same sentiments? * "What is the way then to arrive at that perfection which you promise me to aim at? It is first to do your duty towards God and man, without which every thing else signifies nothing."

Con. I find that his L—p is likely to have in you an able defender, which will lead me to discuss his Letters with a particular attention, that will place them in a more clear and satisfactory light. — I believe there is scarcely an expression in them, in appearance favourable to religion, except those you have now mentioned. — Let us see then what we are to conclude from them. — The noble author here tells his son that religion was a point of greater importance than any of those, concerning which he gave him a multitude of instructions, and that on his seeing it turned into ridicule at any time, or disclaimed, he ought to testify the greatest displeasure. — He says that religion or the discharge of his duty to God, was absolutely necessary to his arriving at perfection, and
that

* 69 let. 1st vol.

that without it every thing else signified nothing. — Strange ! that he should acknowledge religion to be of such importance, and yet tell him that he would not mention it to him ! That during the course of several years constant and regular correspondence with him, he should give him but four or five hints concerning it !

Eug. But you know he gives reasons for this, one of which is that he cannot possibly suspect his son of being deficient in that point, and therefore thinks it unnecessary to give him repeated instructions concerning it.

Con. And why should he be so secure of him with respect to religion as to think that frequent advices relating to it were not at all necessary ? Did not his L—p know that his youth, his station in the world, the bad examples which on all hands surrounded him, exposed him in this particular to a multitude of temptations ? To adorn him with the graces, and every external accomplishment, is what perpetually engages his attention ; he gives him in his Letters ten thousand instructions to qualify him for shining in the polite world with elegance and dignity ; and yet shews almost a perfect indifference to inspire him with a regard to religion, without

out which he declares that all such ornaments would signify nothing. — How shall we account for this striking inconsistency on the supposition that his L—p was really sincere, when he recommended religion to his son, as the foundation of all other perfections? — Had he indeed thought it a matter of such infinite consequence, he would have embraced every opportunity in his Letters to Mr. Stanhope, of recommending it warmly to his esteem, and of promoting his improvement in it.

Eug. These reflections, which appear to be just, did not before occur to me; but I must observe, that besides the reason we have been speaking of, there is another which L—d Ch——d gives, for not writing to his son more particularly on the subject of religion, and that is, he takes it for granted that his Tutor, whose office as a clergyman particularly qualified him for the discharge of such a duty, would take due pains to instruct him in that matter.

Con. Very true; but this can by no means justify him; for allowing that his L—p was much better fitted to direct his son, with respect to all the graceful accomplishments, as no doubt he was, is it natural to imagine
that

that had he been persuaded that his being adorned with religion, was of such moment, that compared with it all other qualifications were of no consequence, he would himself have been so silent on the point, and left his improvement in it entirely to the discretion of his tutor? Were his L—p ever so well convinced that Mr. Harte would take all possible care of his son with respect to that matter, he was too well acquainted with his own powers of persuasion not to know that his advice on a subject, which he himself acknowledged to be of infinite importance, must have had much greater influence. — The obligations to religion being plain, was so far from rendering it unnecessary in him properly to enforce a regard to them, that this should have led to the contrary conclusion. ——— Because a duty is very plain, therefore it is very important, and the omission of it very criminal; consequently, in particular, if there are many temptations to the neglect of it, the practice of it should be more warmly and frequently recommended. ——— These observations however only afford a presumptive evidence of his L—p's indifference with respect to religion. But I have much more on this point
to

to accule him of.—Do you imagine, if the mind is at all animated with a becoming regard for the Deity, it will indulge itself in awful appeals to heaven, and break out into solemn exclamations about matters of a trifling nature, such as his son coming awkwardly into a room, discovering any impropriety in his manner of speaking, or in the little minutiae of good breeding, and things of the like kind, and yet we frequently meet with these in the Letters we are speaking of. What do you think of this sentiment? * “ Nature, thank God, has given you all the powers necessary, and if she has not yet, I hope in God she will give you the will of exerting them.”—The blessed powers of his offspring which our Author here speaks of, and for which he is so heartily thankful to his Maker, are those engaging graces which would not only render him agreeable in general, but enable him to deceive, by the artful wiles of dissimulation, every man he should meet with, and to corrupt the virtue of every woman, when he should find it conducive either to his pleasure or his interest.—I would ask whether

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the human mind can possibly conceive an instance of more licentious impiety? — In the sixty-first Letter of the first volume, his L—p having expressed his hearty wishes that Mr. Stanhope had staid long enough at Manheim to have been seriously and desperately in love with a married lady, a Madame de Taxis, and observed that he lived in hopes that some one or other would excite such a passion in him, adds, “ your hour may not yet be come, but it will come.” — Could a mind possessed of the least sentiment of piety thus wantonly apply an allusion to an expression in scripture made use of on a most solemn and affecting occasion? — What shall we say of the pains which his L—p took, not only to make his son violate several very essential duties commanded by religion, but also to think with perfect indifference of some of its important obligations? Besides, it appears that Mr. Stanhope was subject to a disorder which reduced him at last to a desperate state; this, my L—d frequently mentions to him without giving him the least hint of religion, even when he must have plainly seen that there were little hopes of his life: Had he thought that there was any thing real in religion, was it not
most

most natural for him to have taken notice of it to him when he was in circumstances, that in so many respects required its assistance? I have only another observation to make on this point which relates to the books L—d Ch———d speaks of with approbation.— Of *Voltaire* he says, *nil molitur inepte*. So then his many and various attempts to undermine the evidence of the Christian religion has with the rest of his works, his L—p's very favourable opinion, for had these been at all offensive to him, he certainly would have said so. — Lord Bolingbroke who embarked in the same cause of infidelity, is likewise warmly recommended by him. — The essays of David Hume have in like manner received from him very high applause; an Author, whose shining abilities, had they been properly directed, would have placed him among the first rank of our most admired writers; but you know his character, that by plunging with unbounded licence into the dark and joyless labyrinths of scepticism, and by the use of the most subtle and abstracted speculations, he has laboured not only to destroy christianity, but our belief of the soul's immortality, and of the existence, perfections, and providence of God. Other

sceptics have guarded their sentiments, and expressed themselves with some degree of diffidence and reserve ; but Mr. Hume has thrown off the mask, has laid the ax at once to the root of the tree, and attempted effectually to demolish the very first principles of religion, and yet he is so happy as to be honoured with L—d Ch——d's hearty approbation. He is one of those unerring guides who is to inspire his son with religious sentiments, without which, according to his own ideas, every thing else can signify nothing in order to his arriving at perfection.

Eug. It plainly appears to me that his conduct in this particular cannot be justified.

Con. It is impossible. To praise an Author is so far to adopt his sentiments. — Suppose that L—d Ch——d found it necessary to recommend these books, for their eloquence, the elegance of their style, and the useful knowledge they contain on a variety of points, but that he disapproved of their principles with regard to religion, when he spoke of them to his son, would he not have said so? Would he not have warned him of the danger, and endeavoured with prudent caution

caution to guard him from it? I well remember a particular Letter in which he tells Mr. Stanhope that Lord Bolingbroke was a deist, and doubted of the immortality of the soul; had he at all wished that his son should not adopt such sentiments, could he have been silent on the subject, and not thought it a very proper occasion to declare his own belief of the Christian religion, and persuasion of a state of future existence? Had these writers said any thing that might have misled him with respect to elocution, address, or any of the graceful accomplishments, would he have been as silent on that point? No; he would have set a mark upon it, and censured it with the utmost warmth of expression. — I hope, Eugenius, these remarks have sufficiently opened your eyes with respect to this part of our inquiry?

Eug. I can assure you they have Sir. —

Con. It gives me pleasure to hear it. You know that since the care of your education was first committed to me, it has been a principal object of my attention to impress your mind with just sentiments of religion. I have studied to explain to you the nature and perfections of that glorious and eternal

Being who is the object of it, and taught you the infinite obligations you are under to respect and venerate him: As my labours with you in this noble cause have not been in vain, and your improvements with relation to it have corresponded to my wishes, had you been injured in this respect by the Letters which are the subject of our conversation, it would have given me very sensible concern.

Eug. I know it would Sir, and sincerely thank you for your friendship. — The pains you have bestowed on my education lay me under the most lasting obligations. — You have been the means of convincing my understanding of the reality and importance of religion; and I hope a high esteem and affection for it will ever warm and animate my heart. — But there is one thing I am much at a loss about, why any Author should attempt to destroy the foundations of religion.

Con. As to the publication of L—d Ch——d's Letters, so far as they are chargeable with this, he, as I mentioned before, is no way accountable for it; the world owes this obligation to his Editor. — In respect to those writers I have been speaking of, and
others

others of the same class, who have endeavoured to injure religion, it is very difficult to assign a motive for their conduct. — It is too evident that in this instance they must have quite divested themselves of benevolence; for religion is one of the most powerful bonds by which mankind are united; it presents the mind with a variety of considerations which are the strongest incentives to the practice of virtue, without which, society could not possibly subsist. The conviction of the immortality of the soul, and of the existence of an omnipotent, all pure and just Being, the Creator and Governor of the universe, deters from the commission of vice, and animates to the discharge of every moral duty. The deist attempts to weaken the force of these truths, and the atheist utterly to annihilate them. — The tendency of their writings is to degrade the dignity of man, to render him a much less respectable being in the scale of existence; it is to destroy those noble objects which enlarge his understanding, refine and elevate his affections, and kindle in his soul the most generous and exalted ambition; it is to rob him of a source of the sweetest and most delightful enjoyment, which
gives

gives him a lively relish of the pleasures of life, casts an agreeable light over all his prospects, and inspires him with comfort and consolation in the day of adversity. Their inducements then to propagate such opinions are neither amiable nor honourable. How then shall we explain them? Perhaps in this way. Some of them were of licentious morals, and attacked religious truths to render their character more consistent in the eyes of mankind, and quiet the accusations of conscience. Others have acted in the same manner to shew their ingenuity, and that they might be spoken of in the world as the inventors of something new and surprising. — Wonderful things have been done to acquire fame; you remember the story of the man who burned the celebrated temple of Diana at Ephesus, that his name might be handed down to posterity with the remembrance of that execrable deed. — But I can stay no longer with you at present, tomorrow we will resume the subject.

D I A.

DIALOGUE III.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. **H**AVING considered these celebrated Letters so far as they relate to religion, let us next take a view of his L—p's sentiments with respect to virtue. This part of our enquiry calls for a minute discussion, as there is nothing for which they are more justly censurable than the loose morals they contain.

Eug. If this is the case, he is certainly the most unaccountable author in the world; for if we judge from a variety of his expressions, it appears to me that the cause of virtue never had a warmer advocate. I have collected several of them, and with your permission will lay them before you.

Con. Proceed.

Eug. As an inducement to Mr. Stanhope to study history with attention, his L—p observes, that it* animates and excites to the love of virtue by shewing us the regard and
vene-

* 35th let. 1st vol.

veneration with which it has ever been treated. He shews how much the moderation and equanimity of the old Romans, such as Curius, Scipio, and Fabricius, have been admired; "Such says he, are the rewards that always crown virtue, and such the characters you should imitate." Have not the following sentiments the same tendency?† "The ambition of a man of sense and honour is to be distinguished by the reputation of knowledge, truth and virtue." "Much rather die than do a base and criminal action."‡ "Let no quibbles of lawyers, no refinements of casuistry break into the plain notions of right and wrong; to do as you would be done by, is the plain, sure, and indisputable rule of morality; stick to that, and be convinced that whatever breaks into it in any degree, however speciously it may be turned, notwithstanding is false in itself, unjust and criminal."|| "The sure character of a sound and strong mind is to find in every thing those certain bounds, *quos ultra nequit consistere rectum*; these bounds are marked out by a very fine line, keep it always in your eye and learn to walk upon it."

Con. Have

† 50th let. 1st vol. ‡ 13th l. 2d l. || 142d l. 2d vol.

Con. Have you any more passages of the same kind?

Eug. I have Sir.—Are not the following clearly expressive of the different qualities of virtue and vice? * “Vice in its true light is so deformed, that it shocks us at first sight, and would hardly ever seduce us if it did not at first wear the mask of some virtue.”—† “Let your company shine ever so bright, their vices, if they have any, are so many spots which you would no more imitate, than you would make an artificial wart upon your face.”‡ —“Virtue is in itself so beautiful, that it charms us at first sight, and engages us more and more on farther acquaintance.” — Besides those I have mentioned there are other Letters wherein the importance and advantages of virtue are finely illustrated.

Con. Produce them.

Eug. || “Virtue gives an inward comfort which nothing else can.—Riches and greatness may be torn from us, sickness may deprive us of the pleasures of the body, but nothing can deprive us of virtue.” — “If a man has acquired riches and power by
evil

* 110th let. 1st vol. + 133d l. 2d vol. † 110th l. 2d vol. || 54th l. 1st vol.

evil means, he cannot enjoy them, because his conscience will torment him both day and night; whereas let a virtuous man be ever so poor or unfortunate in the world, still his virtue is its own reward, and will comfort him under all his afflictions; he is delighted with his own reflections, and is esteemed, respected, and admired by the world."* — My tenderness for you makes me think more of the manner than the length of your life, and forbids me to wish it prolonged by a single day, that should bring guilt, reproach, and shame upon you." — "Your moral character must be not only pure, but like Cæsar's wife, unsuspected; the least speck or blemish upon it is fatal."† — "A man who does not solidly establish, and really deserve a character of truth, good manners, and good morals at his first setting out in the world, may impose and shine like a meteor for a very short time, but will very soon vanish, and be extinguished with contempt."‡ — On which account he entreats him not only to keep his own mind unsullied, but warmly exhorts him to be on all occasions the advocate,
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* 179th let. 2d vol. † 180th l. 2d vol. ‡ 5th l. 2d vol.

the friend of virtue, and to treat every breach of morality in others with detestation and abhorrence.

Con. The most strenuous advocate for L——d Ch———d could not find any passages in his Letters seemingly more favourable to him on the present point than those you have collected : Now I suppose Eugenius, you certainly conclude from them, that my remark with respect to the looseness of his morals, is without any foundation.

Eug. Had not our late conversation taught me to be more cautious in my judgment on this subject, I should undoubtedly be inclined to think so.

Con. I am not at all surpris'd at it, for the precepts and reflections you have taken notice of appear to express the most nice and delicate taste for virtue, with a lively persuasion of its excellence and the inestimable advantages which attend it. Had he meant that the general terms they are conveyed in, should be understood in their strict and common acceptation, and had the other parts of his Letters been consistent with them, he would deservedly be placed among the highest class of those distinguished moralists, whose generous endeavours in the cause of

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virtue,

virtue, have handed down their memories with honour to posterity. — Then indeed the pen of the critic or historian, in giving a character of his work, would not be dipped, in the gall of satire, but chearfully employed in drawing his grateful and honourable panegyric. — Thus to be inspired by the ambition of being honoured with the reputation of knowledge, truth and virtue; to be animated by the glorious resolution of dying, rather than commit a base or criminal action; to have the mind pure and uncontaminated, and to look upon every kind of vice, every breach of morality with contempt and detestation, if the words truth, purity, virtue, vice are taken in their natural and proper signification, is to be adorned with every thing that can render human nature amiable, lovely, and exalted. — Ingenuity, elegance, the most graceful powers of persuasion exerted in forming such a character, and extending their general influence to mankind, would demand from the world a tribute of gratitude and the highest approbation. — But alas! these generous feelings of the heart have nothing to excite them on the present occasion: for those striking sentiments you have mentioned, are so far from merit-

meriting our esteem, that they are perhaps the most dangerous part of the whole publication.

Eug. You surprise me, Sir, exceedingly, how can that possibly be the case?

Con. I will tell you. There is nothing in the whole compass of nature so detestable as vice; when no pains are taken to conceal its native ugliness and deformity, we view it with disgust, unless our minds have taken a wrong turn, and our moral taste is corrupted by the habitual gratification of some criminal passion. — Hence the loose morals of L—d Ch——d would by no means have so pernicious a tendency, were they not palliated by these strong expressions he makes use of in favour of virtue. — When he tells you that vice in its true light is so deformed, that it shocks us at first sight; that the man who commits it, is continually tormented by the upbraidings of his conscience, and exposes himself to reproach, infamy and contempt; when he assures us that virtue is itself so beautiful, that it instantly charms us on beholding it, that it is its own reward, our comfort under afflictions, a solid, a permanent good, and a mean of rendering us esteemed, respected, and admired by the

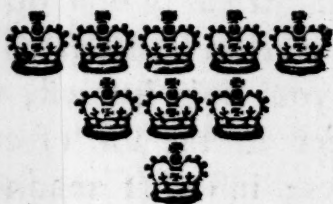
world; we cannot possibly think that he would attempt to recommend the one, or to lessen our regard and veneration for the other. This is the mask, to speak his own language, by which we are seduced, that puts us off our guard, and so engages us in his favour, that we are much more susceptible of his infectious poison. — Appeal to the feelings of your own mind for the truth of this. — Ask yourself whether there are not many instructions which his L—p gives his son, that would have appeared to you much more exceptionable, had it not been for the reason I have mentioned.

Eug. This is placing the subject in a light which I must own I had no conception of. I well recollect there were several advices in the Letters which had not my entire approbation, at least I was not quite clear about them, but I did not consider them with particular attention, and I believe it is true, it was owing to my not suspecting of unbecoming sentiments an author, who in many places hath expressed himself so much to my satisfaction with respect to virtue.

Con. Those advices would at once have appeared to you in their proper light; but the

the case is the same with you as I am afraid it has been with many of his readers ; you have found yourself inclined to explain his L—p's instructions to his son on particular points, by his general declarations relating to morality, rather, than to explain his general precepts on that subject by his particular sentiments. — The former method is quite fallacious, the latter the only one in such matters of finding out the truth. — Use your own reflection for a moment, and you will be at no loss how to determine. — If I say that purity is a grace of intrinsic beauty and excellence, but allow you freely in any circumstance to indulge an irregular passion, if I assert that truth is one of the first of virtues, and tell you at the same time that if it will serve your own interest, there is nothing improper in the use of cunning dissingenuous arts ; in what manner will you judge of my opinions ? You see if you assert, on account of my general principles, that an instance of licentious gratification is not impurity, and that an act of wilful hypocrisy is not inconsistent with truth, you will draw a very wrong conclusion ; but if from the liberty I allow you in these particulars, you determine that I have false

notions of the nature of purity and truth, you think perfectly right. — As a key to explain to you L—d Ch——d's morality, I will lay before you on the next occasion, his sentiments with respect to the foundation of virtue, at present we must turn our attention to other matters.



D I A.

DIALOGUE IV.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. **A**S this is a convenient opportunity, I will now Eugenius, according to my promise, lay before you L—d C—d's ideas with respect to the foundation of virtue. It is necessary you should have a distinct notion of this, for it is the corrupt muddy fountain, that has produced those immoral sentiments, which are exceedingly disgusting and offensive to every mind possessed of the least refinement or delicacy of taste.

Eug. I shall be much pleased to hear you explain yourself particularly on that point.

Con. His L—p speaking of Monsieur de la Rochefoucault says,* “ I know he is blamed, but I think without reason, for deriving all our actions from the source of self-love; for my own part I see a great deal of truth, and no harm at all in that opinion.”

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In this manner he supports his assertion, in which you perceive that ingenuity and insinuating address for which he was on all occasions so remarkably distinguished. — “ It is certain we seek our own happiness in every thing we do, and it is as certain that we can only find it in doing well, and in conforming in all our actions to the rule of right reason, which is the great law of nature. — It is only a mistaken self-love that is a blameable motive, when we take the immediate and indiscriminate gratification of a passion or appetite for real happiness. — But am I blameable if I do a good action upon account of the happiness which that honest consciousness will give me ? Surely not. — On the contrary that pleasing consciousness is a proof of my virtue. — Give me but virtuous actions and I will not quibble and chicanery about the motives ; and I will give any body their choice of these two truths, which amount to the same thing, he who loves himself best is the honestest man, or the honestest man loves himself best.” — Our author frequently applauds, and recommends the Duke de Rochefoucault, with whom the opinion now mentioned concerning the spring of human actions, was a leading principle. — In
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one Letter he says, “ would you know men read la Rochefoucault.” — Mr. Hume likewise, formerly taken notice of, as one of his L—p’s favourite writers, traces up virtue to the same source. — The characters of la Bruyere, an author of the same stamp, are likewise greatly applauded by him.

Eug. I have not perhaps considered these matters with due attention, but I cannot help thinking that self-love is a very strong and powerful principle in the human mind. Nature prompts me to avoid whatever disturbs my enjoyment, she invariably animates me to pursue those objects that contribute to my pleasure; and sure you will not condemn me for thinking that one of the first and noblest of these is a consciousness of virtue, and that a prospect of obtaining it, is not an unworthy motive of action.

Con. I cannot possibly blame either you or L—d Ch——d for thinking that much pleasure arises from the consciousness of virtue, as also that self-love, or a cool desire of happiness, is a strong affection of the human mind. — The pleasures of virtue are the most elegant, the most refined and exalted of any of the sources of good, which give joy and satisfaction to the heart of man. — And as
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to self-love, the circumstances of our being make it quite necessary that it should operate with considerable force. — The instincts, as well as the cool desire of happiness implanted in our nature, are all proper in order to our attaining that perfection designed us by the author of our existence: But then, because virtue gives pleasure, shall we say that the prospect of that pleasure is our only inducement to the practice of it, or that morality has no support, no animating spring but the selfish affections? The man of the world who wishes to gratify all his inclinations, and to shine amidst the outward glitter and parade of life, may with L—d Ch——d be of such sentiments, but let the pure, the genuine decisions of nature be your guide, and what will they lead you to? When you behold your fellow-creature in distress, is it self-love, is it a desire to promote your own happiness, that bedews your cheek with the sympathetic tear, and animates you to fly to his relief? No, your disinterested benevolence is the cause of this exercise of your compassion. — If we really seek our own good in every thing we do, then it evidently follows that we do nothing, until we clearly see that it conduces to that end; but
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are there not ten thousand instances to persuade us to the contrary? The advocates for certain principles may by the help of metaphysical refinements, warp, they may twist the feelings of the mind, and force the appearances of nature into a conformity with their opinion. — But *Naturam furca expellas, tamen usque recurret*. — There is not a man who must not be convinced by a multitude of irresistible facts, that he is impelled by an original law of his constitution to exert himself when an opportunity is presented, merely with no other view than to alleviate the distress or promote the well-being of others. — When he does so, in proportion to the good he has been the author of, he is conscious to sensations of pure and exalted delight; but then this pleasure is a consequence, by no means the actuating spring of his benevolence. — Well Eugenius, what do you think of my doctrine?

Eug. From my present view of it, I cannot withhold my assent from it.

Con. I am glad of it, but I have not yet done, I have other illustrations of the error of this opinion of our author. — If self-love is the principle of virtue, and the spring of all our actions, why does the benevolence
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of those who have lived in ages and countries, widely remote from our own, command our lively and affectionate approbation? Why do we read of the noble efforts in the cause of liberty and their country, of a Camillus, a Scipio, or an Aristides, with such warm and ardent feelings of esteem? On what account is it that his L—p tells us that such exalted characters are the objects of our veneration? Is the patriotism of Camillus, of Scipio, and Aristides, any thing to us? How does it gratify our self-love, or contribute to our private advantage? Nay what is still more strange, more difficult to be accounted for on his principles; had L—d Ch——d lived in the days of these heroes, had he been a Gaul, a citizen of Carthage, or a soldier in the army of Xerxes, where he would have found their virtue to be opposite to the interest of his country, he would have respected and admired it. — Such men, as well as others, are themselves on many occasions compelled to expose the falsehood of their speculative opinions. — * Was his L—p conscious

* Thus Cicero observes that the anxious concern which Epicurus discovered for his friends and relatives in framing his last will, was a convincing proof of the fallacy of his selfish notions, with respect to the nature and foundation of virtue,

conscious of nothing within himself, that might have taught him to entertain more noble and exalted sentiments of the constitution of his mind? — Did the voice of the generous affections there never vindicate their cause? On receiving an obligation, did not his breast glow with lively sensations of gratitude to his kind benefactor? Was he never delighted with the sweet and engaging sensibilities of friendship? Or did he withhold more than other men, his tribute of tender anxiety and condolence on beholding a pitiable object? Could he bring himself to think that these feelings had nothing in them of the generous and disinterested? Must they be stripped of all their beauty and resolved into selfish principles? Yes, they must, and we are required to give our assent to these two maxims, which he is pleased to call truths, “ he who loves himself best is the honestest man, or the honestest man loves himself best.” — They both follow from his scheme, and are equally delusive and unjust. — For the expression here *honestest* is precisely equivalent to the most virtuous. — Now he who loves himself best in L—d Ch———d’s sense, who considers it as a law of his nature to be invariably

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guided

guided by the selfish affections, wraps himself up within the circle of his own little private concerns, and is utterly incapable of those noble and generous exertions, without which he cannot have the least pretensions to that exalted character. — Neither does the honestest, the most virtuous man, love himself best; farther than as prudence makes it necessary, he loseth sight of so small an object, restrains every contracted desire, lays open his breast to the power of a manly extensive benevolence, and makes it his delight, the glorious object of his ambition, to be kind, friendly, and useful to all, who come within his influence.

Eug. Such a character is no doubt exceedingly amiable: But still I cannot think that L—d Ch———d is so blameable for holding the principle we are speaking of, for though he is persuaded that self-love is the foundation of virtue, yet he says that the object of it, our own happiness, is only to be found in doing well, in refusing to gratify our passions indiscriminately, and in conforming all our actions to the rule of right reason. — Now if this motive of his is sufficient to engage us to act a worthy part,

part, is it of any real consequence to virtue, though it should differ from yours?

Con. Yes, it is of infinite consequence to it; for do you not see that this robs virtue of all its dignity, of all that intrinsic loveliness, which renders it the glory of humanity and the noblest ornament of that exalted Being, who is the uncreated source of beauty and excellence. — Consider it in this light, and what can you perceive in it to excite your esteem and admiration, and to captivate your heart? If this principle is just, then virtue is no longer desirable for her own sake; and they who with heroic magnanimity, have suffered a variety of distressing ills rather than forfeit their integrity, have acted a most absurd and foolish part. — But were it indeed unnecessary that virtue should have any thing in it of inherent excellence, in order to engage us to obey her dictates; were that prevalence of the selfish desires that strips her of all her native charms, and reduces her to a lifeless unattracting form, sufficient to regulate our passions, and to engage us to act the part required of us as intelligent and moral beings, our author might have enjoyed his opinion with very little opposition from me; but you will find

that this is far from being the case; for when we adopt the principle that a desire of our own private enjoyment is to be the only guide of our actions, whatever we may talk in theory concerning their conformity to reason, and the impropriety of irregular indulgence, on our reducing this opinion to practice amidst the various objects of desire and temptations that surround us, we find that it becomes a ready advocate for the weakness of our nature, and is easily prevailed with to give its sanction to the intemperate gratification of our passions. The occasion of pleasure is presented, our inclinations are excited, why says self-love resist the impulse of nature? Why submit to the pain of uneasy restraint? That we should do so is the language of ascetic fools who know not the enjoyments of life; indulge then freely, it is your happiness, your chief good. — Thus the checks of conscience are quieted, vice loses its deformity, and no small power is added to the depravity and corruption of the human heart. — On the other hand when virtue, whether in dispositions or actions, is considered as possessed in itself of amiable and engaging qualities, but vice of those which are ugly and deformed, unsuitable to the
dignity

dignity and perfection of every intelligent nature, and that those qualities are perceived by a faculty originally implanted in the mind, to be a judge of our behaviour, just as the external senses are given us, to point out and distinguish their several objects, then we have a fixed and permanent standard, which is quite independent of all our false views and prejudices, to regulate our conduct, to controul our appetites, and direct us to a manner of life, suitable to the important ends of our existence. — I have thus far on this point, out of complaisance to his L—p, spoken as if I thought that he really believed there was a foundation for virtue, and only condemned the principle from which he derived it; but I will now throw off every semblance of disguise, and hope to convince you, that in what he says of self-love, he immediately becomes an apologist for vice.

Eug. If you do, I shall be no longer his apologist.

Con. The first in those modern times who taught the system of self-love was la Rochefoucault; the opinions which he taught with respect to that matter, fully explained and traced to their consequences, were of a very licentious nature, tending to destroy all real

distinction betwixt virtue and vice: These sentiments as I have told you, L—d Ch———d embraced, not as a speculative philosopher, in which sense he might have done so, and yet from the power of nature been virtuous in principle and practice, but with a view to regulate his conduct through life. — It was not his maxim that he should do any particular action, because it was required of him by a moral law, but because in doing it he received pleasure from it; suppose it to be the gratification of a criminal appetite, provided it did not destroy his health or injure his character in the fashionable world, therefore it was virtuous; which you perceive was confounding every idea of virtue, and using with the most licentious and unhallowed profanation, that venerable word. — This idea plainly appears in a remarkable expression of his, I before mentioned to you. — “ Give me, says he, but virtuous actions, and I will not quibble and chicanery about the motives.” Have his words here, *virtuous actions*, any meaning? They can have none that is decent and becoming. Actions cannot be virtuous, unless they proceed from worthy motives; but what the motives are to any action, or the intentions
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from which it is performed, he directly insinuates are of no consequence, does it not therefore follow according to him that virtue has no foundation? That it was his opinion that there are no fixed and permanent laws of virtue is farther evident from what he says in one of his Letters to his friends. — “Are not most of us, he asks, beholden for our virtue to particular circumstances and accidental causes? As for me, I have humility to own, and were I to tell you the whole truth, self-experience to confirm it.”* — Had his L—p thought that there was a provision made for virtue in the original frame and constitution of the mind, he would have ascribed every virtuous action to this, as an invariable cause, and not to one merely accidental, or to any particular circumstance. — A particular circumstance may give occasion to the exercise of good dispositions, but cannot be the original spring of any such action in the opinion of any one who entertains proper sentiments of the nature of virtue. — The observations I have now made with respect to his L—p’s principles, will appear perfectly just to any one who

* Letter at the end of 2d vol.

who will read his Letters with unprejudiced candour. — What is the view which he gives us of the ruling motives of his own conduct? Is it not entirely the same with the account given us of the nature of virtue by those celebrated philosophers he admires, who when they throw off the mask, and speak their opinion without reserve, trace it up to that respectable and honourable source, vanity and pride?

Speaking of himself, he says, * “ that I had vanity to a prodigious degree, I fairly own, and what is more, I confess it without repentance, nay I am glad I had it; since if I have had the good fortune to please in the world, it is to that powerful and active principle that I owe it. — I began the world not with a bare desire, but with an insatiable thirst, a rage of popularity, applause, and admiration; if this made me do some silly things on one hand, on the other hand it made me do almost all the right things that I did.” — Here follows a catalogue of some of the right things that he did from this motive, which appear exceedingly beautiful.

“ It made me attentive and civil to the women

* 72d let. 2d vol,

men I disliked and to the men I despised, in hopes of the applause of both; though I neither desired, nor would I have accepted the favours of the one, nor the friendship of the other; I always dressed, talked, and looked my best; and I own was overjoyed whenever I perceived that by all three or any one of them, the company was pleased with me. — To men I talked whatever I thought would give them the best opinion of my parts, and to women what I was sure would please them, flattery, gallantry and love. — Was not this a pretty mode of conduct?

Eug. I should imagine, Sir, that a desire to please, is not an unbecoming principle. — Would not our situation in life be much less agreeable, if we did not study to render ourselves agreeable to those with whom we are connected?

Con. I grant you that the world in which we live has a right to our complaisance; we owe this to mankind as a tribute to humanity, and find at the same time that it has always a tendency to promote our own enjoyment. — An affected stiffness and singularity in our manners, is not more unamiable in itself, than unpleasing to our friends; and so far from being a mark of humility or self-

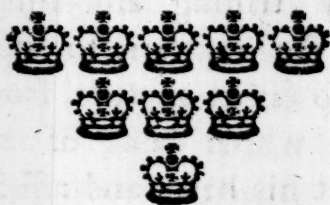
self-denial, of which it assumes the appearance, generally proceeds from pride. — There is a certain pliancy and conformity of behaviour to the particular taste and inclination of those we converse with; there is an ease, an elegance and polite gracefulness, in every thing we say and do, which is extremely engaging, and very well worth the attention of every man who is placed in a genteel station in the world. — But then to rate these accomplishments infinitely beyond their intrinsic value; to consider them not merely as the innocent means of pleasing, but to have an insatiable thirst to be admired and applauded on account of them; to be animated with a vain desire of praise as a ruling principle which has for its object matters relating to politeness, dress and other external ornaments; nay, in order to gratify this passion, to comply with the inclination of others in things which are looked upon by the dictates of integrity with a generous indignation; do not you think, Eugenius, that there is an impropriety, a meanness in this, which any man conscious of the dignity of his nature, and possessed of becoming sentiments, ought to be ashamed of?

Eug. I most certainly do. —

Con. The

Con. The love of virtue is the most honourable and glorious passion of the human soul : Of the different affections of the mind it deservedly holds the first rank, with respect to dignity, and the tendency it has to raise us to the highest degree of excellence and perfection. — Next to the love of virtue, our noblest desire is that of obtaining the esteem and approbation which flows from the practice of it : The difference between this latter feeling and vanity, is this ; the one has for its object the good opinion of others for qualities which in themselves are amiable and praise-worthy ; the other is ambitious of it on account of what has no intrinsic excellence, of what has nothing in its own nature, to command our respect or esteem, but which derives its entire value from fashion, from things merely external, which, independent of the prevailing taste, are perfectly trifling and insignificant. — Such were the matters to which L——d Ch——d, so far as appears, from his Letters directed the whole bent of his mind, on which he set his heart and affections. — To be adorned with the graces ; to shine as all accomplished in the gay and fashionable world ; to express himself with ease and propriety,

priety; to acquire an insinuating elegance of manner, in order to obtain praise and admiration; those were the objects of his ardent pursuit. — Such in respect to these matters as he laboured to be himself, and really was in a superior degree, he endeavours to make his son in all his advices to him. Had he, in the pains he took to inspire him with vanity, kept within the common bounds of decency, and not at the same time done every thing in his power, to corrupt his morals, to deprave and contaminate his heart, he would have much less excited the displeasure of the virtuous part of mankind. — How far he hath done so, agreeably to his licentious principles, which I have attempted to explain, I will endeavour to convince you, the next opportunity we have of resuming the subject.



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DIALOGUE V.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. SHALL we now, Eugenius, proceed with our reflections relating to L—d Ch——d's Letters?

Eug. It will be extremely agreeable to me. Our past conversations on that subject have been of much use to me, by teaching me the folly of forming a judgment of any matter before it is considered with proper attention. — With respect to the particulars you have already taken notice of, I am perfectly convinced that his L—p has not any just claim to my approbation; but I shall be glad to hear what you have farther to say on this point. —

Con. You remember I yesterday pointed out to you L—d Ch——d's sentiments, with relation to the nature of virtue: I shall at present give you a view of those loose morals, contained in his Letters, which are the proper fruits of them. — Human virtue

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is no doubt very imperfect. Men possessed of the best principles, frequently, from the strength of sudden, unguarded passions, and the power of temptation, deviate from the strict line of integrity, and fall into improprieties in conduct: But vice springing from cool, from wilful and deliberate intention, argues the utmost depravity both of heart and understanding, and must ever excite our detestation. — I shall lay before you several passages in our Author, which I am convinced must irresistibly excite in you this feeling. — **“* May I be convinced that your pleasures, whatever they be, will be confined within the circle of good company and people of fashion; those pleasures I recommend to you, I will promote them, I will pay for them. — I confess the pleasures of high life are not always strictly philosophical, and I believe a Stoic would blame my indulgence, but I am no Stoic though turned of fifty-five. — The gallantry of high life, though not strictly justifiable, carries at least no external marks of infamy about it, neither the heart or constitution is corrupted by it.” —

The

* 87th let. 2d vol.

* “ The love of pleasures, is extremely natural, and the enjoyment of them not unbecoming, but then the pleasures of low life are all mistaken, merely sensual and disgraceful, whereas those of high life, though possibly in themselves, not more moral, are more delicate, more refined, and in the common course of things not reckoned disgraceful at all.”—Are not these becoming sentiments, Eugenius?

Eug. You have taught me to answer your questions with modesty, and particularly not to understand his L—p’s words in the sense which they naturally express; but I imagine that the enjoyment of more refined and delicate pleasures, has nothing in it indecent. —

Con. Yes, very refined and delicate indeed! If those pleasures which our noble author here recommends to his son, as proper for him to indulge in, are more delicate and refined, if they are raised above such as are sensual and disgraceful, if they are not unbecoming, why are they not strictly justifiable? Why are they not moral which he says they are not? Why should they not be ap-

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proved

* 4th let. 2d vol,

proved of by the sincerest friends of virtue and philosophy? Is it not the exalted object of philosophy, to raise the mind above pleasures that are gross, mean and sensual, and to inspire it with the love of such as are noble, refined, and suited to the dignity of our nature? But the truth of the matter is, his L—p uses the words, *refined, delicate*, in a loose, indeterminate sense: He by no means intends they should express those excellent ideas they are naturally fitted to convey. — Disdaining those ignoble restraints which fetter the generality of mankind, he levels all distinctions. — Indulgence, neither moral nor justifiable, does not it seems corrupt the heart. — If the pleasures which his son enjoys, are confined within the circle of good company and people of fashion, he will pay for them, he will promote them, whatever they be. — And why not? Are not good company and the fashion, an admirable standard of right and wrong? Are not such judges excellently qualified to prescribe the limits of virtue and vice, and to stamp with the character of decent and becoming, actions, which in the estimation of low and vulgar minds are unhallowed, licentious, and detestable? The indulgence of a criminal inclination,

elination, under the sanction of genteel and respectable associates, is not unbecoming, hurts not the purity of the mind, and is not disgraceful at all : But the very same gratification among those of a humbler station is quite a mistaken one, is disgraceful and the object of contempt. — This most instructive lesson is not the effect of the warm unthinking temperament of youth ; it is the result of cool, deliberate judgment. — Turbulent passions, which are so apt to pervert the understanding and the heart, had then full time to subside with his L—p, for he was, as he himself informs us, arrived at the age of fifty-five.

Eug. How is it possible that I could have so hastily overlooked all this ; I am astonished at my inattention.

Cou. You will have more cause yet to wonder at the deception you have laboured under. — I have collected several other passages stamped with the same signature, some of them in colours infinitely more disgusting. **“* Enjoy, says his L—p, the pleasures of youth, you cannot do better, but refine and dignify them like a man of parts, let them

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* 14th let, 2d vol.

raise and not sink, let them adorn and not vilify your character, let them be the pleasures of a gentleman."—The pleasures here spoken of are of the same nature with those I have just mentioned to you, and indeed are every where praised and recommended in the Letters we are considering. — They consist in the unrestrained indulgence of vanity; in being admired for accomplishments which reach no farther than dress and elegance of manner; in gratifying without controul, within the limits of the polite and fashionable world, every impure desire and licentious appetite. — Our author was firmly persuaded that his son could not possibly do better, than to drink in large and plentiful draughts, at these fountains of refined and fashionable enjoyment. — " Seriously says he, writing to Mr. Stanhope at Manheim,† I am very glad you are whirled in such a tourbillon of pleasures, they smooth, polish, and rub off rough corners, perhaps too you have some particular —, a word which signifies a criminal connection, which is still more effectual." — This course of dissipation, was to be the glorious object of his ambition;
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† 88th let, 2d vol,

the advantages arising from it, would dignify him as a man of parts, they would raise and adorn his character; and all for this excellent reason, that such indulgences would be the pleasures of a gentleman.—An ingenious writer has given us somewhat different traits in his description of that character.—*“ As the great poet, says he, animates all the different parts of learning by the force of his genius, and irradiates all the compass of his knowledge by the lustre and brightness of his fancy; so all the great and solid perfections of life appear in the finished gentleman; as to his heart, it is firm and intrepid, void of all inordinate passions, and full of tenderness, compassion, and benevolence.”

Eug. Such graces are indeed somewhat different from those on which his L—p set his heart and affections. —

Con. Yes, infinitely different.—Notwithstanding the pompous terms in which he speaks of those accomplishments he is so much delighted with, they are no more like the perfections now mentioned, than the dark glimmering light of the taper, is like the glory and splendor of the meridian sun.

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* Guardian.

Ought not the qualities of a gentleman to be such as would adorn virtue, and make it shine with distinguished beauty and grace, instead of those which destroy its very foundation, and cast a deep shade over the native turpitude and deformity of vice? The station of a gentleman furnishes him with the means of education and improvement, which have an admirable tendency to enlarge his understanding with sublime ideas, and to give him a taste for those virtuous, those manly and enobling pleasures, compared with which the enjoyments arising from the ceremony and parade of life, and from the indulgence of the sensual appetites, are mean, trifling, and insignificant.

Eug. A superior taste might certainly be expected of a gentleman from his opportunities and situation in life; but is it not a common observation, that the morals of those in the higher stations are generally more licentious, than of persons placed in much inferior circumstances?

Con. There is, undoubtedly, too much foundation for the remark; the reason of it is this, the opulence of persons of superior rank which if properly improved, would be a noble mean of raising them to eminent degrees

degrees of knowledge and virtue, is too often perverted into a mean of luxurious gratification. — Wealth, to a great many possessed of it, is prostituted to very unworthy purposes; creates a relish for vain superficial enjoyments, becomes the parent of idleness, prodigality, and the most thoughtless dissipation; instead of being employed as it ought, to adorn the mind with noble and respectable qualities in proportion to the distinction of outward station to which it exalts them, it only serves to render their imperfections more conspicuous in the eyes of mankind. — But though the vices of those who move in elevated spheres with respect to external advantages are more conspicuous, it is much to be lamented, that fashion has cast over them a deceitful veil, with a view to conceal their native deformity, and render them less the objects of disapprobation; but it was reserved for the bold and adventurous genius of a Chesterfield to justify and support them. — In his view they are the objects of laudable pursuit, have nothing in them unsuitable to the dignity and excellence of our being; he rather considered them as shining ornaments, and necessary to perfection. — He tells his son that he had
largely

largely indulged in them, and instead of reflecting on it with repentance or the feelings of remorse, made it the subject of his boast, and gloried in it. — If he was right in doing so, and these sentiments claim our approbation, what shall we say of that esteem of moral excellence, of the natural love of virtue, so universally and deeply implanted in the human heart? These feelings must be an imposition on the mind and altogether delusive. — If dignity of station, if the pomp and parade of life can give a sanction to any species of irregular indulgence, what becomes of those laws of morality which in every period, in every circumstance and condition of our being are of unchangeable and eternal obligation? Do you imagine, Eugenius, that the mind can be affected in the same manner by things which are of a contrary and opposite nature?

Eug. This appears to me impossible.

Con. And I believe must do so to every one else. — If then in genteel company and high life, violations of the rules of virtue lose their nature, and are approved of; a strict regard to chastity, to honour and integrity, in the same situation, cannot be the object of esteem; should then a person of
rank

rank tell Lord Ch——d that a regard to his own peace, and a delicacy of feeling with respect to matters of a moral nature, would not permit him on any occasion to do an indecent or unbecoming action ; he must necessarily, on his own principles, treat him with ridicule, or contempt ; he must tell him that such silly and awkward singularity would make him be despised, and prevent him from shining with any dignity or reputation in the world. — Of the like complexion with the rest, are these observations of his Lordship. **“* Our young countrymen have generally too little French, and too bad address, either to present themselves or be well received in the best French companies ; and as a proof of it, there is no one instance of an Englishman’s having ever been suspected of a gallantry with a French woman of condition, but they take up with the disgraceful commerce of prostitutes, though if they had common address, better achievements would be extremely easy ; a young fellow therefore must be very awkward to prefer low connections to a commerce in the course of the world not disgraceful, with a woman of

* 7th let. 2d vol.

health,

health, education and rank. — Men of address and resolution take no denial from man or woman, repulsed, they rally, go on, and nine times in ten prevail." In consequence of such success in these honourable achievements, he gives him this sage advice, " If one method fails, try another, and suit your methods to the characters you have to do with." You perceive here an exact uniformity in his Lordship's sentiments with those we have just considered. — " To be suspected of a gallantry," take notice that he uses the word in this place, and in almost every other of his letters in its most criminal sense, " with a French woman of condition is a mark of good breeding, and no imputation on a man's character, but a connection with prostitutes, scandalous." — Now consider with yourself in what respect a woman of health, education and rank, who is willing to sacrifice her virtue to every man possessed of address, and the polite arts of insinuation, differs from a prostitute.

Eug. I think they are to be ranked in the same class, so far as a regard to character is concerned.

Con. They certainly are. — The dispositions of their minds which are quite independent

pendent of external circumstances, and in no measure altered or affected by them, are perfectly the same and equally detestable. —

If Mr. Stanhope has conceived an affection for any of these ladies of distinction, and thinks that a particular connection with her will promote his interest, he is taught by his chaste instructor, how he is to overcome any difficulties he may meet with in accomplishing his wishes; “ he is to suit his method to the character he has to do with; “ to fortify himself with resolution; if repulsed, he is to rally; when one method fails, he must try another; in this glorious cause he is to go on with manly fortitude; to take no denial; and he assures him for his encouragement, that if he observes his counsel, there is nine to one that he will in the end infallibly succeed.”

What a peculiar felicity was it to our young candidate for so chaste and honourable a prize, to have a father whose long and happy experience of the devices used on such occasions, whose knowledge of the weakness of nature, and of all the avenues to the heart, so excellently qualified him for pointing out to him the way to victory! Never did a parent discover greater anxiety to guard

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loved child from the baseness and ruinous consequences of vice, never did he take greater pains to purify, to refine his taste, and to inspire him with the love of virtue, than our author made use of to corrupt and debauch the mind of his son. ——— In the 224th Letter of the Third volume, written in French, but which the Editor has very carefully translated, least any one not acquainted with that language should lose the excellent moral it contains, he makes these observations on a Letter he had received from him. “ If I durst?† What should hinder you from daring, one always dares when there are hopes of success. A man of fashion knows how and when to dare. He begins his approaches by distant attacks by assiduities and attentions; if he is not immediately and totally repulsed, he continues to advance; after certain steps, success is infallible, and none but very silly fellows can then either doubt, or not attempt it. — Is it the respectable character of Madame de la Valliere,* which prevents your daring, or are you intimidated at the fierce virtue of Madame du Pin? Does the invincible modesty of the

† 224th Letter 2d vol. * Observe that she and those who follow were married Ladies,

the handsome Madame Cafe discourage, more than her beauty invites you? Fie for shame! be convinced that the most virtuous woman, far from being offended at a declaration of love, is flattered by it." — Eternal infamy and reproach be the portion of such execrable sentiments! Until the mind is lost to every feeling of the amiable and decent, until it is robbed of every lovely feature that adorns humanity, and the heart and understandings of mankind are as shamefully debauched as the author who produced them; they must be reflected on with merited indignation. — It is evident that the occasion of them were expressions of irresolution in Mr. Stanhope, with respect to the gratification of an unchaste passion he entertained for certain Ladies. — The divine Being who made us, has planted the seeds of virtue deep in the human heart; the commission of vice at first, shocks on reflection, and disturbs the peace and tranquility of the mind; but a repetition of it imperceptibly renders it less disgusting, and quiets the accusations of conscience. — It seems, however, that Mr. Stanhope, though the utmost possible endeavours had been used by his father to weaken in him the influence of good principles, had not yet been able to

reduce them to a state of *genteel and fashionable* insensibility. — The thoughts of attempting to indulge a licentious desire, attended with aggravated circumstances of guilt, damped his spirit, and filled him with timidity and hesitation. His Lordship considered this as nothing better than a childish weakness, which merited contemptuous ridicule; the yet unhardened Tyro, was afraid of doing a base action; but what was there to fear? Nothing which should have had any influence in diverting him from his purpose; none but a very silly fellow would pay the least regard to so mean a feeling, would doubt or not attempt to carry his point in such a situation. — On these occasions a man of fashion perpetually dares, nothing can intimidate him, provided he has the most distant prospect of succeeding; if by attacks, assiduities and attentions, he can remove the obstacles in the way of his gratification, can find an unguarded unsuspecting hour in which the object of his wishes will fall a victim to his snares, all is well, and he has nothing to disturb his repose.

Eug. These indeed, Sir, are shameful sentiments.—But what is the reason that L——d Ch———d, when he recommends these
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Ladies to his son, speaks of them as modest, virtuous, and respectable; I should rather imagine that this was the most effectual way to prevent him from pursuing any unbecoming designs he might have formed against them.

Con. It is very natural for you to think so, but the motive of his taking notice that they were possessed of those qualities was, that he might have an opportunity of turning them into ridicule; you see he evidently laughs at them, speaks of them as things of no consequence. — Had he been convinced that modesty and virtue were really respectable, possessed of real intrinsic beauty and excellence, and at the same time advised his son to treat them as he does, it would have argued a degree of depravity scarcely to be imputed to an infernal demon. — The same taste that would have led him to esteem, and speak well of these amiable characters, would make him look on a design to injure them with becoming indignation. — In the eyes of his Lordship they were of no account, had nothing in them to restrain the indulgence of a sensual appetite, and he wanted his son to think, and act in respect to them with the same indifference. — Beauty

invited, and would he suffer innocence, modesty and virtue, to be any obstacle to his gratification; Fie for shame! What a noble exclamation! How does it emblazon an illustrious title, and shed a bright lustre on the elevating distinctions of human life! But let us go on with our remarks. — In another letter he speaks in this manner, — **“ I am assured that Madame de Bloss is excessively pretty, and that she hath as yet been scrupulously constant to her husband, though she has now been married above a year. Surely she does not reflect that woman wants polishing; I would have you.”* — Then he adds, *“ force, assiduities, attentions, passionate declarations on your side, will produce some irresolute wishes at least on hers, and whenever the slightest wishes arise, the rest will follow.”* How now, you seem to be agitated!

Eug. If I were not, I must be utterly unworthy of your instructions, and dead to every virtuous feeling of the heart. I blush at the thoughts of having been so grossly duped by my folly. — But besides those enticing seducements does he also recommend

mend force in accomplishing his execrable design?

Con. I gave you his words without the smallest particle of addition.—If assiduities, persuasion, and the Syren arts of insinuating address, cannot prevail with the Lady to give up her virtue, more violent methods must be used to make her obedient to his wishes. — Force is a word of a very obvious and simple meaning, and cannot possibly be understood in any other sense. — Common vices give painful disgust to every pure and delicate mind, but such complicated villainy as this, thrills it with horror; the crime to which he is incited, is of so deep a dye, that it has been held in detestation by all civilized nations, and punished with the utmost severity. — And is this the book, *Eugenius*, which is so universally read and admired? Would it admit of a doubt, one would scarcely think it possible! — Is it not astonishing, that the mere beauty of language and propriety of expression, should have such captivating power as to be able to throw a veil over principles of the most pernicious tendency, and shocking to the first feelings of the heart? That it should be agreeable to rakes and professed libertines, is not surprising, though
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there are many things in it that cannot be pleasing even to them, unless they have arrived at the last stage of degeneracy and corruption; but that persons of a sober way of thinking should give their countenance to such a production, that they should sacrifice the cause of virtue to a little transient amusement, to what is calculated merely to tickle the ear and imagination, is exceedingly difficult to account for. — His Lordship taking notice to Mr. Stanhope of the laws in despotic governments, with respect to restraining the liberty of the press, expressly says, that no books prejudicial to religion, or the interests of the community, ought to be published. — He most certainly in this judgment, pronounced the condemnation of his own Letters. For to say nothing here of their other dark shades, is not the crime of adultery to which he encourages his son with the most licentious freedom, attended with ruinous consequences both to the individual and society? Marriage, you know, was appointed to confine within chaste and virtuous bounds, the wanderings of irregular desire; to refine these sensual passions, which improperly indulged, weaken the powers of the mind, unfit it for the duties of life, and are the

the source of remorse and distemperature. — It is a sacred relation, which to those who enter into it, lays a foundation for the tenderest union of heart and affections, the most entire confidence, and inviolable friendship. — The advantages that naturally flow from it, alleviate the cares and heighten the enjoyments of mankind. — Now what has the gallant, or in other words the adulterous invader, to boast of as the fruits of his crime? Why that to the utmost of his power he robs his fellow-creatures of these valuable blessings; strikes a dagger into the peace of private families; introduces into them the furious demons of jealousy, strife, and contention; that he destroys the affection of parents for their children, tempts to the commission of perjury and other vices shocking to humanity.

Eug. What a licentious and depraved heart must he be possessed of, that can either advise to, or be guilty of so aggravated an offence?

Con. His morals, indeed, must be utterly corrupted. But what you and I, and the generality of mankind call depravity, was *nothing* in the opinion of L—d Ch——d.— One would think that he rather gloried in
these

these circumstances which aggravate the native turpitude of vice. — Madame Cafe, Madame du Pin, and Madame Valliere, whom he took such pains to persuade Mr. Stanhope to seduce, were married Ladies, of spotless innocence and integrity; they were modest, virtuous, and respectable. — An improper connection with those who have lost their character, is less detestable than the conduct of the man who first robs them of it. — They who corrupt others, and are the cause of their breaking through the restraints of virtue in the beginning, are in a great measure chargeable with all the vices and unhappy consequences which frequently follow from it. — The beautiful Madame de Bloss had it seems married a husband whom she loved, and was disposed to discharge her duty to him with untainted honour and fidelity. But our author thought that it was too much for her to live more than a year in a state of innocence; his son must not let so favourable an opportunity slip of shewing how much he had profited by his instructions, he must attack her honour by force, assiduities, and passionate declarations. How worthy to be boasted of was this attempt to triumph over the sentiments of chastity

chastity and religion ; I say, religion, for when Madame de Blos entered into wedlock, she kneeled at the sacred altar, and with those circumstances of solemnity fitted to inspire with awe and make a deep impresson on the heart, called the eternal Being to witness that she would never be unfaithful to her husband, or act a part unbecoming an affectionate and virtuous wife. — And was it a light insignificant matter to tempt her to violate these awful obligations, and to use every possible device to cover with guilt a mind formed to enjoy the sweet and serene delights which flow from innocence and virtue through all the periods of an immortal existence ? When we think of such baseness our hearts shudder. — How do you think his Lordship would have liked it, had others formed designs of the same kind against his own domestic happiness, his wife, sister, or daughter ?

Eug. I imagine he could not have been displeased with them on his own principles.

Con. He certainly would ; the genuine feeling of nature would have got the better of his principles. — He would have resented them with the strongest indignation. — Had any person attempted the honour of a sister, or the wife

of

of his bosom, he would have made him feel the very utmost weight of his provoked displeasure. — But to do as you would be done by, does not appear to have been a favourite maxim with his Lordship. — If it had, he could never advise his son, as we find he does in a variety of places, not to be in the least scrupulous to injure others in a point of the most tender and delicate nature when he should find it at all pleasing or useful to him. — But his notions relating to matrimony are so extremely licentious, that it is to be hoped they were peculiar to himself. — Can any thing be a greater proof of a debauched disposition than the following sentiment. **“ I presume that men and their wives neither love or hate each other the more upon account of the form of matrimony that has been said over them. — Cohabitation produces love or hatred in the same degree out of matrimony as in that relation.”* And so the circumstance of two persons joined in marriage, having given a mutual preference to each other with respect to a union to continue through the whole of life; their being bound by the most sacred

ered ties according to the laws of virtue and honour, to mutual confidence, friendship, and a tender concern for the happiness of each other, has no influence to strengthen reciprocally their affections. — Can there be a more unjust and unnatural assertion? — Would any person but one of the most profligate morals compare the sensual unhallowed attachment to a prostitute, with the affection springing from a relation which is the foundation of esteem, gratitude, and the indulgence of chaste and virtuous love? But it was necessary that L—d Ch——d should make light of the obligations of marriage, that his son might have all scruples in that point removed, and be enabled to violate them without the reproaches of his conscience. — The persuading him to such unbecoming actions, was a matter about which he seems to have been particularly solicitous; He gives him frequent advices with relation to it, and as if he were afraid that this was not sufficient, he endeavours to animate him by the influence of example. — In particular in the 247th Letter * of the Third volume he takes notice that, a criminal cor-

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respondence

* 247th letter 3d vol.

respondence, first with the Dutchess of Burgundy, and afterwards with another Lady, raised the Duke de Richlieu to all his honours, and then beseeches Mr. Stanhope, for God's sake, to acquire the same manners and disposition, in order to reap from them like advantages. — In another Letter, speaking of his own vanity, and passion for pleasure in general, he says, **“ To women I talked what I was sure would please ; flattery, gallantry and love ; by my insinuating address I soon grew in fashion ; this gave me the reputation of having had some women, and that reputation whether true, or false really got me others.”*—His three hundred and eighteenth Letter of the fourth volume where he speaks of some complaints he formerly had in Holland, and of a prescription he got from Boerhaave, which he recommends to his son, is a farther proof of the licentiousness of his morals. — In general, L—d Ch———d cloaths his pernicious advices in language, not offensive to a chaste ear, but there are several expressions in his Letters so grossly indelicate, that a regard to decency will not per-

* 260th letter 3d vol.

permit me to mention them to you. I have said enough to you on this hateful part of the subject, and I am sure we are both tired of it. — Let us therefore at present put an end to the conversation.



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D I A

DIALOGUE VI.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. I WAS much pleased yesterday, to find, that what I said to you, with respect to the loose morals contained in L——d C———d's Letters to his Son, had so good an effect upon you; if you are willing to resume the subject, there are a few other particulars relating to it, of which I wish to give you my sentiments.

Eug. I shall attend to them with pleasure—I dare say they will both instruct and entertain me.

Con. I will endeavour to make them as useful to you as possible; they relate to his L——p's Maxims, concerning Diffimulation, the Fair Sex, and Duelling—As we have now a favourable opportunity we will talk half an hour on the first of these; the other two we will take afterwards in their order—What say you, Eugenius?

Eug. It is perfectly agreeable to me, Sir.

Con.

Con. I am the more desirous to explain to you my thoughts, with respect to Dissimulation, as it is not a vice peculiar to his L——p, but which prevails almost universally in the fashionable world—In proportion as society has emerged from a condition of simple uncultivated nature, and advanced to a state of refinement, Dissimulation has acquired new and encreasing strength.—A wild American, or inhabitant of the Cape of Good Hope, knows not what it is to deceive; his words, without any disguise or affectation, communicate the sentiments of his heart—Take him out of this uncivilized situation, and place him in a community who have learned the arts of modern refinement; insensibly he is taught to conceal his thoughts, and to cast a delusive veil over the honest undefining simplicity of Nature. — If Commerce, and the other causes, which have united mankind more intimately together, have mollified the harsh and turbulent passions of the mind, and been friendly to the invention and advancement of the elegant arts, that ingenuous love of truth, so congenial to the soul, has by no means been equally promoted by them. — In the progress of human

society, ascend but one step above the husbandman, who finds the means of subsistence in the produce of his field, and you will perceive, in many, a strong tendency to act under a borrowed form, and to disguise truth under false and deceitful colours. —As you go up in the scale which marks the various distinction of ranks, you find the arts of Diffimulation gradually improving! When you arrive at courts, “you see, to use our author’s words, nothing there exactly as it appears to be; often very different, sometimes directly contrary* . Interest, which is the real spring of every thing there, equally creates and dissolves friendships, produces and reconciles enmities, or rather allows of neither real friendships or enmities;” for as Dryden very justly observes, “Politicians neither love or hate.” —This is so true, that you may think you connect yourself with two friends to day, and be obliged to morrow to make your option between them as enemies.

Were you to attend minutely to the conduct of those in the genteeler stations of life, were you to examine the forms and ceremonies

* L. 159. 2d vol.

nies which must be observed in their intercourse with each other, according to the established rules of good breeding, how many violations would you be a witness to, of the dictates of sincerity? If one does a small service to another, which costs him so little trouble or expence as to be scarcely worth the acknowledgement, he who is obliged tells the other, he is under infinite obligations to him. — If a person has met with any thing of a painful nature, his acquaintance assures him that he is exceedingly distressed at his misfortune; or, if a lucky circumstance has added to his good fortune, he salutes him with the strongest expressions of congratulation. — Were you at the same time to look into the bottom of his heart, instead of discovering that lively glow of benevolence you might reasonably expect, you would scarcely perceive the smallest traces of either joy or sorrow. — In the polite world it is the mode to exaggerate certain feelings of the mind quite beyond their just proportion, and to lay perpetual restraints upon those which Nature designed should be a source of pleasing enjoyment to us. — It is certain, that the established *etiquette* of good breeding, has refined away, at least, one half

half of our most rational pleasures ; I wish I had no cause to add, of our virtue also ; in respect at least to sincerity, I may undoubtedly pronounce this without any hesitation. — Though in points of mere ceremony, and other matters, which are supposed to be in themselves of a trifling nature, it may be thought that a stretch of veracity is of no consequence, yet it evidently has a direct tendency to lessen in our esteem the obligations of truth.* From the constitution of the human mind, smaller breaches of any moral virtue, more especially if they are habitually committed, lead immediately to more flagrant violations of it. — Truth is a virtue of inestimable value ; a strict regard to it is a most amiable and engaging quality, which dignifies and sheds a peculiar lustre over all the other graces which form a respectable character. — Were a man possessed of every endowment and accomplishment we can possibly conceive, except this,

* It is taken notice of by Historians, as one of the shining qualities which formed the admirable character of Epaminondas, that from his high regard to truth, he would not deviate from it, even in the most trifling matters.

this, he never could command our esteem, or deserve our friendship. — So far from meriting our good opinion he would be an object of contempt. — The statuary or painter, who, in attempting to give us a representation of nature, should spoil the beauty and symmetry of his piece by a deformed ill-proportioned feature, might as well expect our applause, as the person in whom we discover an indifference to truth. — For what purpose did that glorious Being who formed us, bestow the faculty of speech? Was it not his principal intention that by it we might be enabled to convey to others the native undisguised thoughts and sentiments of our breasts? Is not this noble privilege, which so remarkably distinguishes us from the inferior animal creation, the foundation of friendship, and of that intercourse betwixt the different members of society, without which they could not be united, or mutually promote each other's interest and happiness? But when it is perverted to the base unhallowed purpose of dissimulation, it destroys all confidence, fills the minds of those with whom we are connected, with suspicion and distrust, and produces

duces a variety of evils which disturb the peace of mankind, and render them wretched and miserable. — As the character of a dissembler is exceedingly unamiable, and of a most pernicious tendency to the interest of society, it is a peculiar felicity to the world, that few things are more difficult than to preserve it uniformly, without detection. — The hypocrite is at constant war with himself; the disguise which he wears, to cover his deceitful intentions, is in continual opposition to the feelings of his heart, which lie in wait to seize any unguarded moment, in order to discover to mankind his real dispositions. — He is therefore obliged to have at all times a watchful and jealous eye over his words and actions, to prevent suspicion, and preserve the appearance of consistence in his conduct. — One scheme laid for accomplishing his insidious designs will require to be hid from the public view by a multitude of others. — A single unguarded slip reveals the whole of the imposture, and at once precipitates him into infamy.

Eug. But one would think that there cannot be a warmer advocate for the excellence and importance of sincerity than L—d

Ch——d

Ch———d in the following instructions to his son. **“ Truth is the first duty of religion and morality; whoever has not truth, is not supposed to have any good quality.”*

†*I really know nothing more criminal, more mean, and more ridiculous, than lying.*

—*Equivocating, evading, shuffling, is something so mean, and betrays so much fear, that whoever practises them, always deserves to be, and often will be treated with contempt. “ Remember then as long as you live, that nothing but strict truth can carry you through the world, with either your conscience or your honour unwounded.”—*

‡*“ To violate truth is the only art of mean capacities, and the only refuge of mean spirits.”* Would not one conclude that the mind which could dictate such advices, must have been animated by the strongest regard to candor and veracity?

Con. Were you to draw such a conclusion from them, you would find yourself exceedingly mistaken. — The inconsistency which appears in several parts of L——d Ch———d's Letters is perfectly astonishing

* 69th Letter 1st vol.

† 94th letter ditto.

‡ 94th letter, 1st vol.

ing. — Sometimes sentiments are expressed highly honourable to virtue, sentiments which tend to adorn the character with every amiable and respectable quality. On other occasions, and beyond all comparison, the most frequently, you meet with those which are utterly vitiated and depraved. — The cause of this I before explained to you. — When his Lordship writes like a person impressed with a sense of the excellence of virtue, he uses his words in a meaning quite reconcileable to the most licentious morals. As I shewed you in former instances that this was plainly the case, it is evidently so in what he says here of the impropriety and meanness of insincerity. — What he inculcates relating to the violation of truth, respects low and vulgar instances of hypocrisy; he not only indulges, but encourages his son in those arts of dissimulation that might either serve his interest or gratify his ambition; which he by no means considered as unbecoming in a gentleman. — The quotations that follow, will convince you of this. — In the hundred and twenty-ninth Letter of the second volume he says, * “ When you go
into

* 129th Letter 2d vol.

into good company, observe carefully their turn, their manners, &c. and conform your own to them; go deeper still; observe their characters, and pry as far as you can into both their hearts and their heads; seek for their particular merit; their predominant passion or prevailing weakness, and you will then know what to bait your hook with to catch them." In the hundred and thirty-fourth — *[“] The height of abilities is to have a frank open exterior and a reserved interior; to be upon your guard, and yet by a seeming natural openness to put people off theirs. A man of the world must, like theameleon, be able to take every different hue.” — In the hundred and thirty-fifth, — †[“] Not to seem to perceive the little weaknesses and the idle affectations of the company, but even to flatter them in a certain manner, is not only very allowable, but in truth a sort of polite duty.” — In the hundred and fifty-first, — †[“] I recommended to you in my last a piece of art, the flattering of people behind their back,” then he proceeds to tell Mr. Stanhope how he was to manage his own feelings, so as to be able

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* 134th Letter 2d vol. † 135th let. 2d vol.
‡ 151st let. 2d vol.

to take advantage of the weakness of others.— On which his Lordship takes notice that it might be objected that he was recommending to his son dissimulation; he submits to the charge, and justifies the propriety of his conduct. — In the hundred and seventieth Letter * he advises him to study carefully the passions and the tastes of those he would wish to profit by, and to adapt himself to their weakness with that ease and alacrity which would give him a power over them. — In the second volume we meet with several passages to the same purpose. — A versatility of manners is as necessary in social as a versatility of parts in political life; one must yield in order to prevail; one must humble one's self to be exalted; like Saint Paul become all things to all men. † “ In the course of the world the qualifications of theameleon are not unnecessary.” — ‡ “ Humours must be flattered, the *mollia tempora* must be studied and known, confidence acquired by seeming frankness and profited of by silent skill; and above all you must gain and engage the heart to betray the understanding to you. — Hæ tibi erunt artes.” —

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* 170th Letter 2d vol. † 212th let. 3d vol.
‡ 216th Letter 3d vol.

This was the distinguishing character of Alcibiades, and a happy one it was, that he could occasionally and with so much ease adopt the different and even the most opposite habits and manners, that each seemed natural to him. *—“ Happy the man who with a certain fund of parts and knowledge, gets acquainted with the world early enough to make it his bubble.” †—“ Let Misanthropes, and would-be philosophers, declaim as much as they please against the simulation and dissimulation of courts, these invectives are always the result of ignorance, ill-humour, or envy.” —“ Truth, but not the whole truth, must be the invariable principle of every man who hath either religion, honour, or prudence.” ‡ — Was it possible for L——d Ch———d to express a stronger desire to make his son a compleat hypocrite? You see he advises him to study carefully the turn of his company, their manners: to pry as deeply as possible into the qualities of their heads and hearts; to make himself acquainted with their respective merits and prevailing weaknesses; and with what view? — That for his own private ends, he may

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know

* 219th Letter, 3d vol. † 221st Letter, 3d vol. ‡ 245th Letter, 3d vol.

know with what he is to bait his hook in order to catch them, and put them off their guard ; that he might see which of the different hues of theameleon would be most proper for his purpose ; all which on every occasion he must be able to assume with the greatest expertness and facility. — He was to make it his particular care to be intimately acquainted with the dispositions of those he was connected with, that he might know how to flatter them to their face and behind their back ; that he might know when to yield in order to prevail ; that by a happy versatility of manners, that distinguishing and honourable quality in the character of Alcibiades, which his Lordship is emulous that his son should imitate, and by becoming all things to all men, he might recommend himself to their predominant humours and inclinations. — Suppose a person to be possessed of any private intelligence of importance to Mr. Stanhope, how was he to come to the knowledge of it ; the point was easy ; he had the honest counsels of a most candid and ingenuous parent to instruct him. — He was to study his prevailing weakness, and to apply himself to it with insinuating address ; and when, under the appearance of friendship
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and an open undefining sincerity he had insinuated himself into his good opinion, and removed all suspicion of his intention, then, in one of those *mollia tempora*, those unsuspecting moments, when his mind should be full of confidence in his honour and integrity, he was dexterously to avail himself of the opportunity, engage his heart to betray his understanding, and then make his own advantage of the secret found out by this fair and generous device, *Hæ tibi erunt artes.* — Execrable arts ! — The accomplished villain who in the semblance of affectionate regard plunges his treacherous dagger into the heart of his friend is not more abominable.

Are these arts the effect of that sincerity mentioned by our author as one of the first duties of religion and morality, without which a man is supposed not to have any good quality and must become the detestation of God and men ? Is this the manner in which his son is to pass through the world with his conscience and his honour unwounded ?

Eug. It is all a delusion ; the uncorrupted mind must behold such advice with horror. But at the same time, how, strictly speaking, can several of the particulars you have

mentioned relating to his Lordship, be considered as violations of truth ?

Con. Have you reflected on the nature of them when you ask that question ? Was not the bait with which Mr. Stanhope was advised to catch and make a bubble of those who should be subject to his insidious practices, the pretending to be what he really was not ; and is not that falsehood ? Is not the assuming a versatility of manners capable of being adapted to any form, however foreign to the temper and dispositions of the mind, strongly marked with the features of that quality ? —

What do you say of putting on a frank open exterior, whilst at the same time the heart has locked up within it every device of crafty suspicious reserve ? Is not this of the very same tincture with flattery, the praising others for good qualities to which you are perfectly conscious they have no pretensions ? The precise idea of falsehood is the use of words which impose upon mankind by making them believe that you have thoughts, intentions, or dispositions which you really have not. And if a dissingenuous address, manner, or any thing in your external behaviour produces exactly the same effect,

effect, where is the difference? The words lyar and hypocrite have different sounds, but they are both fruit of the very same tree.—

The man who by his countenance expresses approbation of any thing said by another, whilst he is inwardly displeased with it, and the person who tells you he is pleased with it, and contradicts his feelings, both testify an equal disregard to veracity. — The manner of our address, looks, and outward demeanour are just as expressive, and are as powerful means of deceit with respect to the emotions and dispositions of the heart, as words are with relation to our ideas and sentiments.

Does not this bold position spurn every restraint laid upon it by the rules of morality? “ Truth, but not the whole truth, must be the invariable principle of every man who hath either religion, honour, or prudence.” The expression here, truth, but not the whole truth, is taken, except the alteration of a word, from the form of administering an oath to witnesses in judicial matters; trace it from this original, and it signifies that the declaring so much of truth as is agreeable to, and the keeping back that part of it which if known, would be pre-

prejudicial to our interest, though in doing so we violate a moral obligation, is justified by religion, honour, and prudence. — This maxim may be agreeable to prudence considered as the quality of a cunning self-interested hypocrite, but how it can be reconciled to any sentiment of honour or religion, a man of a less discerning intrepid ingenuity than our noble author would scarcely venture to explain. — Agreeably to this you observe he expressly declares himself an advocate for dissimulation.

Eug. But Sir, Is every kind of dissimulation improper? I should rather imagine that the concealing our thoughts and feelings on many occasions, is not only innocent, but our duty.

Con. That we should speak the whole of what we think on all occasions is no way incumbent on us; this would be not only imprudent, but often productive of very bad consequences both to ourselves and others. — It is also exceedingly right that we should restrain all our unsocial passions within the bounds of decency and good breeding; and mould our demeanour in the manner that will render us most pleasing and agreeable to our friends and connections. — But then we
must

must never dissemble. — Diffimulation marks a deceitful disposition, and is used to express a want of candour and ingenuity, which is not consistent with the dictates of integrity. In respect to matters of this kind a good man can never be at a loss. — There is a line here, pointing out the boundary betwixt virtue and vice, which he will instantly perceive on appealing to the honest unprejudiced feelings of his heart.

Eug. But is there no indulgence to be granted in this point to persons in a particular situation? — Lord Chesterfield had chosen for his son a distinguished political department, and a considerable degree of address was necessary to qualify him for it; may not this in some measure plead his apology in respect to the advices he gives him relating to insincerity?

Con. It is impossible. — Sincerity is one of the unchangeable laws of morality, and lies at the foundation of all the duties it enjoins; dignity of station or the nature of any employment whatever which men may have assigned them, can no way give a sanction to the infringement of it. — Were this so, might it not with as good reason dispense with the obligations to every kind of virtue?

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If a prime minister, or resident at a foreign court may innocently practise hypocrisy in order to accomplish any particular point; suppose in this case the most criminal gallantry to be as useful to him, may he not commit it? Why not on this principle? and so saith his Lordship. — And what will you say of assassination, perjury, or any other aggravated species of immorality? The same motive will equally justify them. — But will it really do so according to the sentiments of any uncorrupted heart? He could have no pretensions to that amiable character who could answer this question in the affirmative. —

Deceit in any situation, rank or condition, is particularly hateful; you remember what generous indignation the people of England discovered at a late instance of it practised by certain persons at the conclusion of a treaty with the simple unlettered inhabitants of India. Though he should be ever so subject to the imputation of a misanthrope, and would-be philosopher, every honest man will exclaim, and express a becoming indignation against the vice of hypocrisy and dissimulation, whether he finds it in a cottage or a court. — Were the influence of these Letters entirely confined to those in the same rank of life
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with the person to whom they are addressed, perhaps the cause of virtue would be very little injured by them; but the reader, let his station be ever so different, if he brings himself to approve of the licentious instructions they contain, though he does not consider them as either addressed or applicable to himself, will feel insensibly their pernicious effects on his own conduct. — If he can be persuaded to think that the line of virtue may be broken and dispensed with in any circumstances, he will soon apply the same kind of reasoning to justify it in his own. — But I had almost forgot to take notice to you, that his Lordship, in order to render his instructions more effectual with respect to that craftyameleon-like versatility of manners, which he so warmly recommends to Mr. Stanhope, strongly advises him to form a particular connection with the Jesuits. You know the character of the Jesuits, that their insidious hypocritical devices in principles and practice, by which they attempted to annihilate every obligation of truth and sincerity, have made them the disgrace of human nature. — They are become quite proverbial on account of their disingenuous arts. — To
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have the cunning of a Jesuit expresses that quality in its most detestable perfection. * —

— These are the men, though banished with infamy out of almost every country in Europe, whom Lord Chesterfield advises his son to bring to his house, and be intimately acquainted with, in order to be instructed by them in the methods of dissimulation.

Eug. I am sensible that the Jesuits are exceedingly odious on account of the qualities you have mentioned, and cannot but look upon them as the only fit instructors for such as wish to have all the honest dictates of nature rooted from their minds; but I request that you may explain yourself more particularly on this point, for I am not quite clear about it, whether there are not some circumstances, such as the immediate prospect of impending evil, wherein truth may be dispensed with, without the breach of a moral obligation.

Con. When the case is of such a nature that much hurt with respect to our safety or property will be the certain consequence of an

* 165th Letter 2d vol.

an inviolable adherence to truth, it must be owned that the situation is a very trying one ; but that even such a circumstance will not justify a breach of veracity, has been the opinion of philosophers distinguished for their eminence and integrity. — And these have been the reasons of their belief. — It is evident that among those laws of virtue which are of unchangeable and eternal obligation ; a regard to truth is of the first importance, both on account of the influence it has in rendering the character of men respectable, and in preserving the peace and happiness of society. — But if the limits of veracity may on any occasion be infringed, would not this have a tendency to destroy, in the opinion of mankind, all obligations to it. — On this principle, the persons concerned are to be the only judges of the circumstances in which a falsehood may be told with propriety. — These will be various according to their different complexions and dispositions. — One man will think it his duty only to violate truth when his life is at stake ; a second will dispense with it, when he is in danger of losing a considerable part of his property ; a third will be less scrupulous,

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and think he may lawfully deviate from veracity, in order to avoid a much less evil ; whilst a fourth will see no reason, if falsifying is not inconsistent with morality to avoid mischief, why is it not quite as agreeable to it, when we have a view of obtaining by it some valuable good. — In this manner truth will lose all its dignity and excellence, and come to be violated on every, even the most trifling occasion. — Besides, if sincerity may be dispensed with, either to avoid evil, or gain some present good, why not purity, or any other virtue, when the very same end is to be accomplished by it ; and then what becomes of all moral distinctions ? Does not this seem to you to be a fair conclusion ?

Eug. I have nothing to say in opposition to it.

Con. Never give up this principle that virtue is the distinguishing glory of your nature, and that nothing should prevail with you to depart from it. — The various trials arising from the temptations of life, are designed by the great master of the drama to refine your taste and give dignity and strength to your nobler affections. — A consciousness of retaining your integrity in every situation will

will raise you to true honour and esteem,
will heighten your pleasures, and cast a di-
vine lustre over all the future scenes of your
existence. — But enough on this point,
to morrow we will go on with our enquiry.



DIALOGUE VII.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. **Y**OU know we yesterday considered L—d Ch——d's maxims with respect to dissimulation; the point next to be examined is his sentiments of the fair sex.

Eug. His opinion of them appears not to be very favourable, nor consistent with those professions of love, admiration and respect of them which he frequently inculcates. — It is to me somewhat uncommon.

Con. Uncommon ! It is perfectly original ; I suppose no author since the days of Adam has produced any thing like it ; to treat the fair sex with respect and delicacy, is a mark of urbanity ; it is one of the polite and genteel accomplishments. — How could his Lordship in this particular utterly forget all his admired breeding and good manners on which he so much piqued himself ? It will be a very agreeable office to me to attempt
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to vindicate them from the unmerited aspersions he has cast upon them. † — “ He says that a regard to the graces is the whole of women, who are guided by nothing else.”

———— But this is a high compliment compared with other of his remarks upon them; for he asserts, ‡ “ that women have but two passions, vanity and love, and that in general all they say and all they do, tends to their gratification; he who flatters them most, pleases them best, and they are most in love with him who they think is most in love with them. No adulation is too strong for them, no assiduity too great, no simulation of passion too gross.” In the same strain he asks his son on another occasion, * “ if he had found out that every woman was infallibly to be gained by every sort of flattery.” In another Letter he desires him to ‖ “ be convinced that the most virtuous woman far from being offended at a declaration of love is flattered by it,” that is, the most virtuous woman will not be displeased, but gratified by a declaration of a desire to rob her of her virtue, which evidently is the kind of love

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† 112th Letter 1st vol. ‡ 177th Let. 2d vol.
 * 243d Let. 3d vol. ‖ 234th Let. 3d vol.

he here speaks of; this is just the same thing as if his Lordship had asserted that a strictly virtuous woman is no where to be met with; agreeably to which he positively affirms elsewhere, that any woman may be had every way. — But it is in the hundred and twenty-ninth Letter of his second volume, that he expresses himself most fully on this subject. — †“ I will say he to Mr. Stanhope, let you into certain arcanas that will be very useful for you to know, but which you must with the utmost care conceal, and never seem to know. Women then are only children of a larger growth; they have an entertaining tattle and sometimes wit, but for solid reasoning good sense, I never in my life knew one that had it, or who reasoned or acted consequentially for four and twenty hours together. Some little passion or humour always breaks in upon their best resolutions. Their beauty neglected or controverted, their age increased, or their supposed understandings depreciated, instantly kindles their little passions, and overturns any system of consequential conduct, that in their most reasonable moments, they might have been capable of

† 129th Letter 2d vol.

of forming. A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humours and flatters them, as he does with a sprightly forward child; but he neither consults them about, nor trusts them with serious matters; though he often makes them believe that he does both; which is the only thing in the world that they are proud of; for they love mightily to be dabbling in business, which by the way, they always spoil, and being justly distrustful, that men in general look upon them in a trifling light, they almost adore that man who talks more seriously to them, and who seems to consult them: I say, who seems, for weak men really do, but wise ones only seem to do it. No flattery is either too high or too low for them. They will greedily swallow the highest, and gratefully accept of the lowest; and you may safely flatter any woman from her understanding, down to the exquisite taste of her fan."

Eug. I scarcely think it possible that these could really be his Lordship's sentiments.

Con. You have not the least cause to doubt of it, but every reason to be convinced that both here, and in all the other parts of his Letters he speaks his genuine undisguised thoughts.

thoughts. — But do you think that the Lady who has so exceedingly obliged the public in communicating to it these Letters, included his Lordship's opinion of the female world in the high compliment she pays them when she says that on account of their singular merit they would be handed down to posterity?

Eug. If she did, and thought herself one of the originals, from whose engaging lineaments his Lordship draws his picture, she is either possessed of uncommon humility, or not much distressed with refinement and delicacy of sentiment; at least she is a contradiction to her author's assertion, "that he who flatters a woman most, pleases her best, and that flattery is the only effectual way to obtain her good opinion; in the present instance illiberal abuse seems fully as well to have answered that end.

Con. You are very right. — But what could be L—d Ch——d's reason for representing his ideas of the female sex as *arcanas* to his son? If they were founded in truth, no man of the least acquaintance with the world could possibly be a stranger to them. But he was certainly right in calling them *arcanas*, for they were undoubtedly such to every

every one but himself; none except one of his own acute penetrating discernment ever did, and I will venture to prophecy, ever will make so extraordinary a discovery. — But to give you my thoughts seriously on this point. — It would be a most unhappy matter were the view which our noble author gives of women in general, a just one. — Had they no respectable endowments of either the heart or understanding, they would be wretchedly qualified for acting the important part assigned them in the œconomy of nature. — How could they be capable of discharging their duty in the many valuable and honourable relations which they are appointed to fill, if they were void of sense and good affections to preserve them from folly, and direct them to propriety of conduct? — Indeed his Lordship's account of them, if at all credited, must rob them entirely of esteem, and make them objects of contempt and ridicule. — By sinking them so very low in the scale of intelligent beings, they lose almost all their consequence, and cannot be considered with that attention and respect, which in every civilized nation of the world has been looked upon as their due. — The tendency in this respect of such
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a way of thinking is extremely hurtful to those relative duties, on the faithful performance of which, the comfort of individuals and society greatly depends. — If a sister is despised by a brother, is it to be expected that she will receive kind and sisterly usage from him. — If a husband views his wife in this light, will not this be a strong temptation to him to treat her not only with indifference but contempt? If a son has not that good opinion of his mother which is the foundation of esteem, is it natural to suppose that he will honour her with respect and filial piety? A sense of duty will no doubt have a becoming influence on the behaviour of the more wise and virtuous; but those we are related to, or connected with, can never expect that affectionate treatment from us which flows from love, esteem, and regard, if we suppose them to be destitute of the amiable qualities that are the objects of these feelings. — Besides the immediate and direct effect of such an opinion of the fair sex with those who may be so thoughtless and inattentive, as implicitly to adopt it, is to expose females to a thousand times greater temptations, and make them infinitely worse. — There is a dignity in virtue that
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commands respect, even from the most dissipated rake. — If he has reason to be convinced that any person of the other sex on whom he has placed his inclinations, is possessed of it, he is struck with a respectful awe which puts a stop to the progress of his unhallowed passion; divest him of that opinion, and let him think that nothing is wanting to insure him of success but a mode of address suited to her prevailing weakness; he sets his ingenuity to work, and lays before her every allurement, every insidious snare, in order to accomplish his end: what frequently must be the consequence of such insidious arts may easily be foreseen.

Eug. But how can it be accounted for that L—d Ch——d should entertain ideas so void of all foundation in nature and truth?

Con. I think very plainly in this way. — His Lordship, according to his own acknowledgement, gave himself very much up to the gratification of irregular desires; this led him to be connected with women of no reputation for decency or virtue, and we may naturally conclude, silly, vain, and of little understanding. — It is also very probable that the honour of others fell a victim to his deceitful stratagems and alluring address,

dress, who, had they not met with a person so eminently skilled in the methods of seduction, might always have preserved an unsullied character. — Hence he formed his opinion of the whole sex as all rakes and libertines do.

Eug. He had a very bad principle to support him in such a conclusion. — But had he no foundation for it?

Con. None to justify his expressions with respect to this point. — It cannot be pretended that women are perfect; they partake of all the passions, and are subject to all the weaknesses and infirmities of human nature, of which, by the way, in the other sex, his Lordship does not entertain a very honourable opinion. — But does it therefore follow, that they are guided in every thing, by a regard to the graces, that all they do and say, tends to gratify their vanity and love; that no adulation, no simulation of passion is too gross for them, that they are not capable of the purest and most untainted virtue? — Does it therefore follow that they are to be considered in no other light than as grown up children, that they are destitute of good sense, fit to be trifled with, but not to be consulted, or trusted with matters of a serious

rious and important nature? How ignorant or full of prejudice must the mind be that could entertain such ideas? Let us examine them a little. — As to the imputation on the female sex, that they are guided entirely by a regard to the graces, one should have thought that his Lordship would have been the very last person to bring this charge against them; for is not this the shrine at which he intreats his son to pay his almost constant adoration? There are near 400 Letters published which he wrote to him, and almost the half of every one of them is taken up with advices to him on that subject. — Though the desire of getting rid of a rival power lay very near the heart of the elder Cato, one simple expression of it, *delenda est Carthago*, satisfied him at the conclusion of every speech; but there is scarcely a sentence in our author's Letters where he does not warmly take notice of the mighty, the infinite consequence of the Graces. — *The graces, the graces*, are perpetually ringing in your ears. — Were they of the very great importance he represents them, they could not be over-rated. — A thing of inestimable value cannot be too highly prized. That they are of considerable importance is very certain. — A rough vulgar uncultivated

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address and behaviour is quite unpleasing ; whereas elegance of expression, the doing and saying every thing in a polite and easy manner, is extremely engaging and agreeable, but by no means to be compared, in point of dignity and excellence, with the internal beauties of the mind and an unblemished conversation.—That from a desire to please, many of the female, as well as of the other sex, are too attentive to external attractions is very true ; but certainly more can be pleaded in their behalf with respect to this, than can be said for us. — You know that custom, and the laws of modesty forbid that women should make the first advances to the male sex with a view to a union with those whom nature formed to protect and support them comfortably in future life. — Now the graces, the outward winning accomplishments, are here most friendly to them, they make impressions, particularly in the beginning, greatly to their advantage, and plead with silent eloquence in favour of their fair votaries. — But at the same time, nothing, but the most shameful partiality can deny, that many of the female sex, even in the gayest and most elevated stations, so far from being wholly engrossed by these accomplishments,

ments, do not pay a greater attention to them, or prize them more than they deserve; they know the various qualifications necessary to their true happiness, and put a value upon each according to its intrinsic excellence, and fitness to that end. — As to their vanity, one of the passions to which his Lordship says they are entirely devoted, it must be acknowledged, that they are the most elegant and beautiful part of the creation; and is it natural for them to be ignorant of this, and not to wish that others should not be insensible to it? — As to the desire of approbation for qualities that are naturally praiseworthy, this is not vanity; it is a principle which distinguishes the most virtuous and exalted spirits. — If however there are any of the female world who in every thing they do and say, have an eye to praise for what in itself has no intrinsic excellence, I pity them, but will never be their advocate; at the same time it would be doing great injustice to the fair sex, not to take notice that if a proneness to vanity is one of their predominant weaknesses, this is in a great measure to be charged to our account. — They have passed but very little the age of childhood when with all the appearance of sincerity, we begin to flatter

their beauty, and personal accomplishments; almost every thing we say to them, is in the strongest terms of exaggerated praise? And is it wonderful that many of them should believe us, should think that they have engaging qualities which they have not, and value too highly the qualities which they have? At this time of life especially they have naturally very open unsuspecting hearts, which makes them more liable to be imposed on, by the dissingenuous and alluring arts we make use of in order to deceive them. — I suppose no man ever took more pains in this particular to bait his hook with engaging colours, or paid them a more enticing tribute of adulation than L—d Ch——d; he was perhaps frequently too successful; and therefore all the sex were vain coquettes, pleased and delighted with nothing but flattery. — Had they paid no regard to his artful addresses, what name do you think he would have honoured them with?

Eug. I suppose he would have called them affected prudes.

Con. There is not the least doubt but he would. — Though let him have thought and said what he pleased, it cannot be doubted but that great numbers of that sex would,
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not only from appearance but the genuine feelings of their minds, treat all attempts to flatter them with merited contempt.—Love also it seems is a passion which has an entire ascendance over them. — No doubt they have that feeling in common with us ; they got it from the author of their being to answer the wisest ends, and many there are who never pervert it to an unworthy purpose, never permit it to exceed the bounds of the strictest innocence and purity. But this I deny, saith his Lordship. If you do, it is the dictate of an unhallowed and licentious heart. — Every thing he has said upon this subject may clearly be traced up to the same source ; it tends to remove a very powerful restraint on the indulgence of irregular passions, and to encourage the most corrupt and licentious morals. — What multitudes of women are and have been adorned with as unsuspected and incorruptible virtue as ever did honour to the memory of the chaste Lucretia. — To harbour a thought or design inconsistent with untainted modesty would make thousands and ten thousands of them miserable.—If others have sullied their reputation, perhaps in ninety nine instances of a hundred, man who should rather be the en-

courager, the friend and faithful guardian of their innocence, is the original cause to which this is to be ascribed. — Giving himself up to the influence and direction of a criminal appetite, he lays his schemes to undermine their sentiments of virtue with all the cunning and insinuating enticements which his artful ingenuity can devise — by flattery, professions of the sincerest attachment, by promises, nay often by the most solemn vows and declarations, that his designs are honourable, he engages their affections, and then in an unsuspecting hour he takes advantage of their credulity and precipitates them into ruin — Utter ruin and loss of esteem is indeed generally the consequence. — For the inhuman custom of the world considers a single blot in the character of a female as irretrievable infamy; instead of being encouraged by good advice and gentle treatment to return to the paths of virtue, she meets with universal scorn, and is utterly cast off from the regard of all her friends and connections; unprotected, and exposed to the direful effects of necessity and despair, a series of new temptations compleat her destruction. — Do not you think that the first enticer to a crime attended with such fatal

consequences, has much to answer for, Eugénus ?

Eug. He is certainly in a great measure accountable for them, and must be unhappy in the reflection, unless his mind is hardened to a sense of complicated guilt.

Con. He undoubtedly must. — But to return to our subject. — The disgusting colours in which Lord Ch——d draws the female character in general, are certainly very inconsistent with the common opinion of the world. — One convincing proof of this is, that from the most remote period, all the celebrated artists in sculpture, painting, and poetry, have constantly represented the several virtues under a female form; which they would not have done, had they not well known that this would render their productions more pleasing and agreeable; this they never could have done, had they in this respect contradicted truth, nature, and the general sentiments of mankind. — That women are in general possessed of much greater purity and delicacy of morals than our sex cannot be disputed. — We are very sensible of this, and testify it on many occasions. — An indecent expression used in the presence of women, is considered to be no better than
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rustic unpolished barbarity, and a gross violation of the first rules of decency and good breeding. — Have you not taken notice of the impatience which men frequently discover to get rid of the company of females?

Eug. I have, and wondered at this instance of their want of taste.

Con. Want of taste! They consider their departure as a signal for beginning toasts of a certain kind, and indulging themselves in a levity of conversation, which puts virtue to the blush, injures the chaste and delicate feelings of the mind, and encourages a vicious dissipation of morals. — With respect to religion, a regard to which is one of the best marks of virtuous dispositions, it is a fact well known, and highly to the honour of the female sex, that were it not for the respect which they pay to it, the least vestiges of it, in many places would scarcely be perceived. — With respect to the indiscriminate remarks my Lord has made concerning their want of good sense, and their childish ignorance, they are hardly worth notice; that they have not the least foundation in truth, the respectable figure which individuals of them have made, in history, criticism, poetry, is a convincing demonstration.

Eug.

Eug. I believe, Sir, very few of them have distinguished themselves in any of the branches of polite literature.

Con. True, many of them have not, but those who have, are a proof of what others are capable, provided their faculties enjoyed the same advantages of education. — Particularly, I think it highly probable, that from the tender and delicate structure of their minds they would distinguish themselves in matters of taste and imagination, much more than men, were they to turn their attention to them. At the same time I cannot help observing, that whatever cause there may be to alledge that they have little force of understanding, this is very much owing to their not being furnished in the early part of life with the means of cultivation. — After they have received the first elements of instruction with respect to reading, &c. an attention to dress, dancing, music, and the other polite accomplishments includes too frequently all the particulars of the education of females in the genteeler stations; whilst a matter of much greater consequence is neglected; the improving their minds in those things necessary to qualify them for discharging with decency and propriety, the relative and domestic duties,

duties, particularly instructing their children; a most important office, which, in the early part of their life, is almost entirely committed to their care. — But with all their disadvantages of education, women in general, begging his Lordship's pardon, have sufficient understanding not only to be consulted, but to be trusted with matters of the most serious and important concern. — Were not this the case, many a master of a family, in the management of his affairs, would appear in but a sorry and contemptible point of view. — If the character, in point of sense, with which Lord Ch——d compliments the fair sex, was taken from his knowledge of the ladies in England, and is a just one, it would appear that they have greatly degenerated since the conquest. For the historians of Britain of remote antiquity acquaint us, that “ among them, women were admitted to their principalities, and general commands, by the right of succession, merit, or nobility. — In the days of Boadicea, Cæsar's captains felt this to their cost; and we know, that, not very long since, a woman governed the affairs of England with much honour to herself, and with distinguished dignity and advantage to the nation, and protestant

testant interest in Europe. — I shall only
 add this observation, that as the human kind
 is the workmanship of a Being of the most
 perfect wisdom and benevolence, the diffe-
 rent sexes into which it is divided are formed
 with natural endowments suited to the par-
 ticular situations they are intended to fill.—
 The respectable virtues which depend on the
 stronger and more vigorous exertions of the
 mind are requisite to the sphere assigned to
 man. — The softer and more amiable vir-
 tues become the circumstances allotted to
 woman. — She has good sense given to
 her, sufficient to enable her to act the part
 prescribed her with discretion and propriety,
 and a heart animated with sensibility. —
 From this texture of her constitution, she is
 qualified in a peculiar manner for discharging
 with propriety, the kind and endearing of-
 fices of sympathy and friendship, and for
 performing the various relative duties, with
 an amiable sweetness and tenderness of af-
 fection, which give a lively relish to our
 joys, and greatly alleviate our pains and
 sorrows. — Both sexes by a proper use
 of their endowments become truly amiable,
 and serve a most valuable end; but when
 they pervert them to unworthy purposes,
 they

they are no longer objects of esteem, and lose all their dignity and excellence.*

* Lord Kaims in one of his sketches has undeniably proved, that in the first stage of human society, that is, the savage state, women are of little or no consideration, treated as slaves or brutes; but as society refines and improves, women become of more consequence, and when it arrives at its highest perfection, they are then put on a footing with men, with respect to rank, station, and all the rights and privileges of nature, and according as they are treated more or less in this way, it is a mark of the civilization or barbarity of a people.



D I A.

DIALOGUE VIII.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

WE now come to the last particular of our enquiry with respect to L—d Ch——'s Letters, which is duelling. — Have you ever been at the pains to consider it.

Eug. I cannot say I have brought my mind to any settled judgment in this matter.—For some time past I have wished for an opportunity of talking with you on this subject, and should be glad to hear your sentiments of it, that I may know how to conduct myself with propriety on any future occasion.

Con. I am glad of this opportunity. In a little time you will bid adieu to my instructions; you will finish your studies, and mix with the active and busy part of mankind; therefore you should now endeavour to get a clear and distinct view of the manner in which you are to conduct yourself with propriety, in the various circumstances

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in which you may be placed. — A prudent general arranges his army in order, and plans with wisdom the mode of all his operations before he enters into the hurry and confusion of battle. — A virtuous and becoming course of action in every situation of life, can only be the result of deliberate and judicious principles. — The point we are now led to by the subject which on some late occasions has engaged our attention, is by no means one of those which is of the least importance for you to be well informed of. — L—d Ch—d having given his son some instructions with relation to the manner in which he should conduct himself on receiving certain offences, observes, * “ that should any thing be said to him injurious to his honour or moral character, there was but one proper reply which he hoped he would never have occasion to make.” What he means here by a proper reply is a challenge. — In another Letter he tells him, that on being injured in a particular way he must call forth his adversary into the field, in order to demand satisfaction. — Perhaps there is scarcely an instance to be found in which the practice of mankind is so flagrant
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* 151st Letter 2d vol.

a contradiction to their sound judgment and sentiments, as duelling. — You will not meet with one in a hundred, (let him act as he please) who pretends to justify it. — When it is attempted to be vindicated, the arguments made use of for that purpose depend on the falsest principles and are too insignificant to produce conviction.

The circumstances in which my Lord advises his son to have recourse to a challenge, are those in which an imputation has been cast on his honour or moral character. — Tell me, Eugenius, what do you mean by the word honour?

Eug. I believe, Sir, it signifies the being possessed of those qualities that render us the objects of approbation.

Con. Your definition is just; but do you think that any thing can be the proper object of approbation which is inconsistent with the laws of virtue?

Eug. I am persuaded it cannot.

Con. I have not the least doubt but I shall be able to convince you that duelling is to be considered in this light; if so, the practice of it can constitute no part of true honour, and must be a most extraordinary method for

a person to take to vindicate his moral character.

Eug. But what, Sir, is the reason that duelling is confined to our part of the world; if I am not mistaken, there was no such practice in Greece and Rome, nor among any of the nations of antiquity, whose courage was never called in question; and I believe there are many countries at present, who are as much strangers to it.

Con. You are not mistaken. — I will endeavour to explain that matter to you. — When the Goths and Vandals, and other barbarous nations destroyed the Roman empire, and spread themselves over these northern parts of Europe; they destroyed not only all the marks of polite literature, but those of civilization also, wherever they came. — Instead of adopting the Roman laws, which by the wisdom of the most celebrated legislators, during a long series of ages, had been brought to a high degree of perfection, they continued obstinately attached to their own customs; and introduced them among the people that were conquered by their arms. — I call them customs, for civil institutions they had none. — Of the various methods they had recourse to for the administration of justice,

justice, and preserving the peace of society, that of single combat was particularly remarkable. — When any one thought that he had cause to charge another with violating his rights, he called him to the field, and according to particular forms, prescribed and regularly observed on such occasions, supported by combat, the truth of his accusation.*—Blinded by the darkening influences of superstition, they vainly thought that the supreme Being would immediately interpose in favour of the innocent person by giving him the victory; accordingly if the unfor-

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* The origin of duelling hath been accounted for by an ingenious author thus. Among the barbarous nations which over-run the Roman empire, there was not sufficient power to restrain the injurious, or to enforce exact distributive justice. The whole soldiery were fellow adventurers, and the meanest among them looked upon himself as on an equality with the leaders of the expedition. When any quarrel therefore arose between individuals, their commanders, had no power of enforcing the decision they might be inclined to make. To decide the difference therefore they were obliged to allow the parties themselves to settle them by the sword, by which alone they had any right to the countries they possessed. See Robertson's notes and illustrations on his preliminary discourse to the History of Charles V.

tunate combatant was not killed on the spot, the judges appointed to preside in the contest, convinced of his guilt, inflicted on him an adequate punishment. — This mode of determining offences extended at first without exception to every member of society, neither difference of character, of rank or condition could be pleaded as an excuse from the obligations of it. — Aldanus, King of Sweden, and Adingus King of Denmark, were under the necessity of accepting challenges and entering the lists with their own rebellious subjects. — Nay, what is more astonishing, even Ecclesiastics, the sacredness of whose character might have exempted them from such folly, were obliged for a long time to conform to this absurd and irrational custom. This custom beginning with the very infancy of these nations, its influence so amazingly increased, that in length of time, the various particulars, relating to the causes and manner of conducting duels, were formed into a regular system, or code of laws; but what most of all added to its power was the spirit of chivalry, which seized like a phrenzy the minds of every class of men about the middle of the dark ages. — In England the custom of single combat was not less the fashion
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than in the neighbouring kingdoms ; we are told that the judges of the court of Common Pleas, and sometimes the Lord high Chancellor, and Earl Marshal, presided at these feats of arms, and pronounced sentence. —

You must easily perceive how extremely pernicious the consequences of such a practice must have been to the interests of society. —

Justice was perverted, innocence oppressed ; the cruel, the ambitious and insolent invader, was often crowned with honours, instead of suffering the punishment merited by his crimes. — Not only the individuals origi-

nally engaged in contention were distressed by it, very frequently their relations, their friends, their dependents, nay whole towns and communities were drawn into the dispute and involved in the carnage and miseries of war. — The minds of men beginning to be tired of evils so destructive of human happiness, and advancing from ignorance and barbarity to a more refined and civilized state, in which they were not a little assisted by the revival of Letters, the cause of these calamities came to be gradually laid aside. — Order arose out of confusion. Laws were enacted conducive to the public safety ; the execution of which was

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committed to the civil magistrate who had a power vested in him of inflicting a punishment on offenders, adequate to the nature of their crimes. — This remedy restrained within smaller bounds, but by no means entirely cured the disease. — For still there are offences of a lesser and more peculiar nature, for the punishment of which the law has made no provision; in respect to them the custom of duelling is as prevalent, and as universal in these countries as ever.

Eug. I think I have been told that there are laws both in England and France that expressly forbid it.

Can. There are, but various methods are taken to elude them which render them almost entirely useless, whilst the spirit of it so strongly prevails among those who are opulent and powerful, that civil authority can have but little influence. — Such a practice is perfectly consistent with our idea of the character of a *Hun*, a *Goth*, or a *Vandal* in a state of savage uncultivated nature; but that the least traces of it should appear among us their polished descendants, who enjoy the most liberal advantages of improvement, and on whom the arts and sciences have shed their genial humanizing influences,
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is not more astonishing than it is disgraceful. As notwithstanding we are still so fond of this mark of our origin, and it is so much the taste of the fashionable world; to guard you, if possible, from its contagion, I will shew you on the clearest principles, that it is not only in the highest degree absurd, but inconsistent with every just sentiment of virtue and religion. — I say then first, that the practice of duelling is absurd. — For consider what the intention of any person is when he sends a challenge to another. — Is it not that he may have an opportunity of properly resenting some injury he has received from him? But is it a rational way of doing this to bring yourself into a situation where your antagonist will have the same power to make you suffer, that you will have to hurt him? Apply the same mode of proceeding to a matter of a similar nature. — Suppose any one had robbed you of your property, and was to have inflicted on him the penalty determined by law; would you appear with him in open court, and declare a resolution of submitting with him to whatever sentence the Judge thought proper to pass on him, Would not a person injured who acted thus, be looked on as bereft of his

his senses. Does not the person who calls the man to the field that has affronted him hereby declare that he is himself free from offence, that he has done him no injury? But is the subjecting himself to the hazard of being hurt, perhaps of suffering the most exquisite torture, the just and natural reward of innocency?

Is the exposing himself to a second and worse injury a fit method for obtaining a reparation of the first?

Our behaviour on such occasions is a thousand times more irrational than that of an ignorant and barbarous Goth; for our minds are free from superstition, but he, if innocent, was convinced, that the Deity, as a mark of his approbation, would certainly protect, and bring him off conqueror. — Let us also consider again the reason that is generally pleaded for giving or accepting a challenge. — You know it is that the imputation of dishonour, or in other words of cowardice may be avoided.

Eug. I do Sir. — And I do not wonder that this motive should have very great influence. — It must be an exceedingly mortifying thing for a man of spirit to lie under such an imputation.

Con.

Con. I suppose, by spirit, you understand courage. — Inform me what you mean by courage.

Eug. I mean by it a contempt of danger, or a firmness of mind which raises it above the influence of fear.

Con. And can you imagine that fighting a duel is a proper evidence of the strength of this principle? If you consider the matter with attention, you will, I apprehend, be of the contrary opinion. — Is it a proof of true courage for a man to expose himself to a greater evil from the fear of a lesser?

Eug. It certainly is not.

Con. This then is precisely the case with the duellist. He exposes himself to the point of his antagonist's sword, because he has not fortitude to bear those irrational reflections which might be cast upon him were he to decline it. — You know that Cato by killing himself has acquired with numbers a character of exalted heroism; but fear was undoubtedly at the bottom of that unbecoming action. — He could not endure the thoughts of being subject to the power of Cæsar, after he had trampled on the liberties of his country, and therefore destroyed himself by a voluntary death.

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In the like manner the duellist submits to a shameful practice, because he has not magnanimity to follow the light of his understanding and the honest dictates of his conscience.—Consider that the declining or accepting of a challenge, is no certain mark of courage. Some there have been of unquestionable bravery in the day of battle, who, from principle would not on any account fight a duel;—and others have fought duels, who, when brought to the true test, have proved themselves arrant cowards, and turned their backs on the enemies of their country. — Besides, courage considered as a quality depending on a certain temperament of the constitution, and abstracted from the motives from which it is exerted, cannot lay claim to our regard more than bodily strength, or a feature of the countenance; otherwise, the bear or tyger of the forest, might with more propriety than man demand our respect. — So far is courage from having a title to our favour in all circumstances, that when employed in a bad cause, it is universally detested. — Let it be exerted in oppressing the innocent, in robbing the widow and fatherless of their right, and it becomes the object of abhorrence, —

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Whereas the refusing with steadiness to conform to a vicious custom, though authorized and supported by the fashionable world, argues a manly resolution, a dignity and excellence that constitute the noblest and most respectable fortitude. — Pursue this thought, and what is the conclusion? Why the advocate for duelling must not forfeit his honour, he must stand fair in the good opinion of mankind.

But of what part of mankind? Not the sober, the wise, and judicious few; but the vain, the thoughtless, and undiscerning multitude. — And is their approbation of such infinite consequence? But suppose him in possession of this mighty acquisition; has the man who refuses to sacrifice his conscience to this criminal practice nothing as an equivalent? Can he meet with no friend to plead his cause or vindicate his reputation? Yes, every man of virtue respects, esteems, and admires him. — And sure the regard of a single individual of sober thought and reflection, who is a judge of real merit, is of greater importance, is much more honourable, than the giddy applause of ten thousand of dissipated manners, who have not sense to distinguish and place a proper

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value on what is amiable and becoming. — In such cases obloquy is praise, and every tribute of approbation bestowed, a testimony of intrinsic worth. — But Duelling, considered in every point of view, seeks its end in the strangest and most unaccountable way. — If a person of superior rank receives an affront from one of the lowest and most despicable character, but well dressed and of a genteel appearance, according to the laws of honour he must challenge him, oblige him to meet him on equal terms, and give him satisfaction. Thus it pretends to maintain the honour, and preserve the dignity of a gentleman, by bringing him frequently to a level with the meanest, the most worthless, and contemptible part of mankind. — I will now endeavour to shew you that this barbarous custom is inconsistent with justice.

Do not you think that it is one of the first principles of justice that we ought not to violate the rights of any of our fellow-creatures?

Eug. I do. —

Con. Yes, the person whose mind has a proper sense of this virtue, will not stain the reputation of another, or hurt him in his person or property. — And besides this, if he

he is injured himself, and punishment is necessary, he will adjust the kind and degree of it to the nature of the offence he has received ; should the punishment be greater than the offence, in proportion as it exceeded it, instead of being the injured person, he would become the offender. — For this reason he will not wish to punish himself, for he has felt from experience, that the resentment which is excited by injury real or imaginary, takes pleasure in nothing but its own gratification, strives to extinguish every other feeling, and to make its object unhappy, without hearkening to the dictates of reason or humanity. To prevent us from determining in our own cause, for which we are so ill qualified by the pernicious tendency of this passion, laws in every civilized country have been instituted, which, as I before observed to you, take the punishment of offenders out of the hands of individuals, and lodges it in the power of the civil magistrate. — He balances the scales of justice with strict impartiality ; free from prejudice and passion, he examines into the nature of offences, and with all the equity in his power, inflicts sufferings on the guilty, according to the malignity of

the injuries they have done. — Now this fair adjustment of punishment to the nature of the offence committed, which has been considered as a most important object by the wisest lawgivers, is utterly violated by the practice of duelling.

Not one in ten thousand of those offences, where this is thought the proper mode of redress, deserves the penalty of death; nay in general they scarcely deserve the slightest expression of resentment. — When crimes are committed of a capital nature, this kind of satisfaction is scarcely ever thought of. —

If a person is deprived of his property by another, of whatever station, or has taken away from him the life of a relation or a friend, he does not challenge him for the injury, but consigns him over to the punishment prepared for him by law. — The intention of the duellist is evidently to rob his antagonist of his life. — A slighting look or expression, an accidental affront never intended, is to be punished with the very same degree of severity, as the most aggravated offence. Is this adequate? Is it equitable? Is a trifling insignificant affront, a sufficient reason for cutting off from society so noble and dignified a creature as man. —

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Was such an admirable piece of divine workmanship formed for so unworthy a purpose, was it made to be sported with at the pleasure of a most iniquitous and unhallowed custom?

But I will now shew you how much it has also stamp't upon it the want of humanity. Admirable is the provision made for the happiness of our fellow-creatures in the constitution of the human mind. — There is implanted in it a feeling by which we are all linked together as it were by an invisible tie. — — — Examine it, and you will find that the influence of this principle is not merely confined to our relatives or intimate connections, but that it is extended to all who bear the common stamp of humanity,

TOPICS against DUELLING.

1. The punishment of the offender is altogether disproportionate to the offence. Is it that a contemptuous look or expression, a hasty, passionate, reproachful word should be expiated with nothing less than the blood, the life of the offender, &c?

2. Is not he who, deliberately giving or accepting a challenge, kills another,

or is killed himself, by every law human and divine, guilty of the murder of another or of himself. Is not thus going to the field armed with the weapons of death, after time to think or reflect, with a full intention to kill or be killed, to all intents and purposes malice prepense, and does it not deserve a suitable punishment in this world and the next? Is not murder in this case aggravated by every circumstance of wickedness and folly?

3. Suppose you have killed your antagonist, or are killed yourself, how doth this vindicate your character from those imputations which are generally the cause of duels? Will the world the less believe a man a liar, or a coward, because he has fought a duel?-- It is not one or twenty actions of this kind, but the general tenor of his conduct through life which must determine his character.

4. A man of nice honour, whom nothing less than a duel will appease or satisfy, is he not a pest to human society? — Is he not to be looked on as a bravo, an assassin, to be avoided and detested as such? Thank heaven, such bullies are now generally despised, and all men will carefully avoid their company,

pany. — To accept a challenge from such a one, and put your life on equal terms with his, in compliance with a barbarous custom, can be looked on as nothing less than great weakness, or desperate folly and madness.

5. The bravest are ever the least ready to give or take offence. Some there have been of unquestionable bravery in the day of battle, who, from principle, would not on any account fight a duel. Others have fought duels, who proved themselves arrant cowards in the field of battle, of which there are instances in our own times. — Duelling then is no mark of true courage. It is rather an undoubted mark of cowardice from the fear of infamy or shame to do an action in direct opposition to principle and conscience.

Falsus honor juvet & mendax infamia

Terret, quem nisi mendosum & mendacem.

In proportion as a benevolent principle is deeply engraven on our minds, as we are pleased with and approve of it, any practice injurious to it must be wrong and unbecoming. — But is it not the tendency of duelling to injure, nay to eradicate this amiable, this best of principles from the human heart? Alas! of how many useful and valuable members

bers hath it robbed society? How often hath it blasted the enjoyments of private families, struck a dagger into their peace, and plunged them into the depths of affliction? How often hath it torn from wives their tender and affectionate husbands, and brought the hoary hairs of aged parents, with grief and sorrow to the grave? — Reflect a little on the manner in which a person of nice punctilio, with respect to this inhuman custom, is affected, and how he conducts himself. — He receives an affront that considered in itself, and probably in the most unfavourable point of view, ought, to diminish very little his happiness, but which, were the motives to it and intentions from which it proceeded candidly and fairly examined, would perhaps dwindle into nothing; but his resentment, heightened from its first beginnings by the influence of the laws of false honour, resists the impulse of reason, and labours to extinguish every propensity of his nature. — Reflection of this kind succeeds reflection, until his faculties are wholly absorbed and he is inflamed and animated by passion; he then hastens to obey its impulse, and call the offender into a situation where he will have an opportunity fully to gratify

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it.—Suppose him to be victorious and that he has utterly accomplished his destruction.—How long does his triumph continue? It is as fleeting as a shadow.—A consciousness of guilt terrifies the human mind, more especially that of which malevolence is the cause, and which has produced unhappiness to our fellow creatures.—He now feels this from dreadful experience.—Those vain ideas of honour, and those turbulent emotions, which hurried him to the action he has committed, all subside, and leave full room for the bitterness of reflection.—In one fatal moment he has precipitated into eternity, engaged in an impious act to which he had himself tempted him, one, perhaps, to whom he was connected, not only, by the common bonds of humanity, but, perhaps, the most endearing ties of friendship.—He perceives also that the relations of the unhappy sufferer penetrated with sorrow for his loss, consider him with abhorrence and merited indignation.—Every circumstance, that can heighten his crime, appears to him in the most aggravating light.—Each succeeding thought encreases the poignancy of remorse, and animates the accusations of conscience to torment him with their avenging scourge.—The remembrance of the hateful

hateful deed casts a melancholy gloom over his future prospects, and tinctures with dissatisfaction his best enjoyments through the remainder of life.

Eug. These are indeed dreadful consequences; but are they common to all in the circumstances you have mentioned?

Con. Those whom unfeeling habit has rendered deaf to the voice of virtue and humanity may be strangers to them, but they are certainly natural to every one in such a situation, as numbers can bear witness from their miserable experience.

Eug. But if I may not gratify my resentment by punishing those who injure me, why was that feeling implanted in my mind?

Con. You may just as well ask why you were furnished with any of the other passions, for every one of them prompts you to indulge it.—All the feelings of nature are wisely suited to the circumstances of our Being, and are intended to answer a valuable end; but that can never be obtained unless they are restrained in their gratification within due limits, but of those limits they are altogether incapable of judging, the fixing them is entirely the province of reason and the commanding

commanding faculties of the mind.—Thus resentment, as well as benevolence, was given us to promote the general happiness; it was planted in us to prevent the tender affections on certain occasions from degenerating into weakness, and to defend us against the effects of violence and all manner of injustice. But when we permit it to lead us to punish others, merely with a view to its indulgence, and in a manner or degree which is more than proportionable to the nature of the offence, we directly contradict the design for which we were furnished with it.—Now you must see from what I have said to you on the subject, that a greater abuse of resentment than duelling cannot be conceived.—When expressed in this way, instead of being a preservative from evil, its natural tendency and effect is to produce abundant misery, not only to the individuals more particularly concerned, but to all those immediately connected with them.—I shall only farther take notice to you with respect to this practice, that besides the considerations I have mentioned, Religion most expressly forbids it.—The Deity never intended that any rational Being whom he hath so honourably distinguished as man, should

should sacrifice his life, or even expose it to the smallest risk from respect to a vain punctilio, or iniquitous custom.—We are placed here in our several situations, like so many centinels on their posts, which amidst every tryal and temptation we must maintain with dignity to the end.—To desert them wantonly from vanity or passion, is a wilful and presumptuous contempt of the wisdom and justice of Omnipotence, which merits his highest displeasure. But if the arguments suggested by the light of nature leave any doubt unsatisfied with respect to the impiety of this practice, the Christian Religion must certainly remove it, which under the several penalties, and with the strongest and most authoritative emphasis, forbids the indulgence of the wrathful and malevolent passions.

The temper of mind from which it proceeds, is not more inconsistent with the example, than the express precepts of our divine Law-giver, who commands the forgiveness of injuries, and suspends our own forgiveness on that condition.—This point is so clear that it requires no illustration. I hope *Eugenius*, you are now convinced that Lord C——d's advice to his son with relation to duelling, can as little be defended, as that on other subjects which we before considered.

Eug.

Eug. I am Sir, and have only to wish that my present sentiments may always influence my conduct.

Con. If they do not, my instructions will be of no importance to you. — Your only danger will arise from the custom of the world, which the minds of too many have not intrepidity to get the better of.

But to enable you to become superior to it, I entreat you to fortify your mind with this reflection, which I have often inculcated before, that no mode of conduct which is in itself wrong, can possibly be sanctified by fashion; and whilst you act from this principle you may behave in such a way as to avoid, at least in a great measure, those foolish imputations which the thoughtless are too apt to cast upon such, as have the virtue to be singular in these matters. We know that several have refused to comply with the fashion in this particular, without being subjected to the least suspicion of timidity.—

With this view I would recommend to you on all occasions, a manly firmness and dignity of manner which seldom fail to command respect, and will impress others with a persuasion that you have a sufficient degree of fortitude to oppose danger, when

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you are called into a situation in which you think it is your duty to exert it. Do not imagine that any law, human or divine, forbids self defence, when you are wantonly insulted and attacked. No, the great law of self-preservation, requires this as a duty you owe not only to yourself but to your family and country. But this is by no means inconsistent with a peaceable temper, not easily inflamed or prone to take offence, but ever ready to forgive and to put the most candid construction on mens words and actions. Particularly, on every proper opportunity, declare it to be your determined purpose, that you will neither give nor accept a challenge, and give your reasons for it with that steady resolution which a consciousness of acting from right principles ever inspires. I cannot suppose that you will give any man a reasonable cause to be offended with you, but if it should so happen, it is your duty, and altogether becoming the character of a gentleman to make a suitable apology; should your intentions at any time be misunderstood, and should you be thought to have injured any person, command your feelings, and expalin the mistake with calmness and good nature; this, it is highly probable, will settle the matter

matter to your satisfaction.--But should you be the injured person, conduct yourself in the same manner ; restrain your passion, examine coolly the nature of the offence ; the intention of it and motives from which it proceeded ; if you do so, you will find that of one case in twenty, you have little to be displeased with, and consequently may easily forgive ; should it fall out otherwise, let not your resentment hurry you into a criminal action, but exert that noble magnanimity which consists, in sacrificing one of the strongest feelings of our nature, to a sense of virtue and rectitude of conduct.—By acting this part, you need not be afraid of passing through life with dignity and reputation.

I have now taken notice of the several things that are chiefly exceptionable in Lord C———d's letters. If the observations they contain on manners, history, and politics, expressed in the most agreeable and elegant style, had not been sullied by sentiments prejudicial to virtue and common decency of morals, they would be a valuable acquisition. But these destroy their value and render them exceedingly pernicious.—There are already too many temptations in

the world to dissipation ; this singular temptation need not have been added to them.—It is certainly a singular one, for I may venture to assert, that from the most remote antiquity, another instance cannot be produced of a Father prosecuting, through a series of years, even to a pretty advanced age, a regular and deliberate scheme for corrupting the morals of his Son, and making use of every art and enticement in order to accomplish it.—Parents, whatever may be their own principles or practice, generally appear displeased with vice in their children, express at least some degree of anxiety for their virtue, if not from the love of itself, from a regard to common decency, and their own character in the world. But these ideas were treated by his Lordship with contempt.

In what a different point of view would these letters appear, if they contained the instructions of a parent, who whilst he took pains to adorn his son with all the graceful and pleasing accomplishments, was still much more solicitous, to regulate his passions ; to save him from the allurements to vice ; to inspire him with a regard for religion, and animate him with the love of virtue ? Then, whilst the reader would be entertained with
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the beauty and elegance of language, his mind might receive impressions that would contribute to its improvement; but now the pleasure which he enjoys from an agreeable arrangement of thoughts, expressed with ease and propriety, and from several useful observations on life and manners, is far more than overbalanced by the loose sentiments he continually meets with, that have a dangerous tendency to ruin his taste for virtue and corrupt his heart.—But if there are any of his Lordship's Readers who cannot see this, whose strained panegyrick of this publication has mixed with it no allay of censure, you may be certain that this is owing to depravity of mind, or want of reflection.—The case of those, who are prejudiced in favour of it from the former cause is hopeless, it is quite vain to reason with them on the subject; as to those who are fond of it from the latter, should you beg of them to consider whether they would like to have a father or a son exactly of that character which it labours so industriously to form; a moment's thought would oblige them to answer your question in the negative.—Should you extend your inquiry a little farther, and ask them if they would wish to belong to a

society composed of such characters, every individual of which was thoroughly skilled in the arts of cunning, and disposed to practice them; was licentious in his morals, had no fixed principle of virtue, no rule of action, but the fashion and selfish desire of promoting his own interest and gratification; the most natural reply undoubtedly would be; that rather than be members of such a community, they would fly to the most inhospitable uncultivated desert.—Why then do they give their countenance and approbation to a book of such a tendency?

Is not the applauding it indiscriminately, the speaking well of it, a most effectual method of spreading more extensively its infectious poison? and surely they who do so are in a great measure answerable for the consequences.—Lord Ch——d was earnestly desirous to form the dispositions of his son by the model of his own example; he seems indeed to have been much pleased with his own accomplishments, with the use he made of them, with his dissipated taste, and the success he had in the gallantries of the gay and fashionable world; this way of thinking continued with him to a late period of life, but it forsook him before he dropt
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into the grave.—For we find that in his will, written in his seventy seventh year, he deprecates the justice of that eternal being, whose pure and excellent laws he was then sensible he had violated. And as to the vain and licentious pleasures which had been the subject of his boast, and centre of his happiness; he calls them pompous follies.—And what was the reason of this? Why, the deceitful dream was gone.—Those delusive objects which had perverted his understanding and his taste, had vanished.—Things appeared as they were, not in those foreign colours in which they are dressed by prejudice or passion.—The near prospect of that world into which he was going to enter, opened the eyes of his mind, taught him that vice and irreligion were inconsistent with true wisdom, unbecoming the nature of man, and offensive to his God.—I am afraid *Eugenius*, you are quite tired with the subject; but before I finish it, I must give you the following advice, which I beg you may attend to, as it proceeds from my earnest desire of your happiness.

Be constantly on your guard against those temptations which have a tendency to pervert your judgment and corrupt your heart.--

Multitudes

Multitudes of them surround you on all hands, some of them open and visible, whilst others lurk in disguise; the pernicious influence of the latter kind, can only be avoided by a quick discernment and watchful circumspection.— You laid aside lately these friendly guardians, and were likely to fall into the snare.— On every such occasion, you are threatened with the same kind of temptation.— Not only Lord Ch——d's Letters, but all other books written with a design to undermine the principles of religion and virtue, endeavour to attain their end, by a specious appearance and insinuating address.— The authors of them know this to be absolutely necessary, and that an open attack upon things considered to be so venerable and sacred, would excite general detestation.— Some times their conclusions are fair, but when you trace them to their source you find them deduced from false principles; they will again assume principles the justness of which cannot be disputed, but then they draw consequences from them that cannot be admitted.— An elegant persuasive eloquence of manner and expression, and a refined subtle dexterity of reasoning, are very powerful auxiliaries on such occasions.— Most commonly

commonly every such truth designed to be shaken, is attacked under the delusive pretext of friendship.—But sift these fallacies to the bottom; strip every thought of its deceitful ornaments; compare it, and others connected with it, with the dictates of sound Judgment, and you will run no risk of being imposed upon.

The influence of custom, as I have often mentioned to you, is another dangerous temptation of which you should be continually watchful. Custom is a torrent which has a tendency to hurry down with irresistible violence all who come within its power.—What, says the advocate for fashion, would you have me to be singular? Would you have me to be pointed at and ridiculed? It is impossible for a man to live in the world, with any character, without complying with the manners of it.—This *Eugenius*, is a fatal rock on which the virtue of thousands and ten thousands has been shipwrecked. — Write this truth on the bottom of your heart in the strongest characters, that custom can as well make two to be a thousand, as alter the unchangeable and permanent laws of right and wrong, of virtue and vice.—No power on earth can make that to be proper
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and becoming which is not in its own nature justifiable.—And that which is right cannot be changed into its opposite, by all the fashions in the universe; therefore when in your way through life you are required to comply with any custom, if you are convinced that it is improper, that it cannot be reconciled to the dictates of truth, and integrity, let no possible persuasion prevail with you to conform to it.—But in things that are indifferent, shew a chearful inclination to please, and render yourself agreeable to those you are connected with.—As a flexibility of manners in the former case, would render you contemptible to yourself and to all wise men, obstinacy with respect to the latter, would argue a want of benevolence, and an indifference to the sentiments of others, which you should ever most carefully avoid.—Nothing but a respect for the approbation of conscience can be a proper apology for singularity. So far as virtue will permit, you should do every thing in your power to engage the good opinion of those you live among. Affability, good-nature, politeness, and easy genteel address will be very conducive to this, and set off to much advantage your more respectable qualities.—

I by no means think the graces of the same consequence as Lord Ch——d, but they certainly very well deserve your particular attention.—The pleasing, the amiable, and respectable qualities united, form a character which is the highest perfection of human nature.—But the most finished accomplishments, unadorned by those endowments which in their own nature command respect, have neither beauty, dignity, nor excellence; and I may add, can give very little satisfaction.—Whereas the pleasures arising from those dispositions that command esteem, or from a becoming regard to virtue and religion, are not only noble and elevating in themselves, but a spring of the truest enjoyment.—Religion, not as represented by wild fanaticism or gloomy superstition, but in her native dress is a lovely engaging form, and one of the best friends of human happiness.—How does the inimitable beauty of the works of nature, their perfect regularity, harmony and order, their exquisite contrivance and design, considered as the effect of consummate wisdom and excellence, delight the imagination, and excite feelings in the mind, which are a source of the most agreeable entertainment.— Believe me *Eugenius*, love and esteem

esteem for the amiable perfections of Deity, with the discharge of those duties which flow from them, afford the highest satisfaction.—Virtue is the conformity of the will, and of our conduct in life, to the laws of the infinite eternal Being; and consider whether every wise man should not make it the object of his choice.—Many indeed think, that it imposes severe restraints on their gratifications, and that it is an enemy to enjoyment.—But enquire into the reason.—It is because she forbids the irregular indulgence of the passions, requires us to sacrifice a lesser good to a greater, always to prefer such pleasures as are rational, permanent and exalted.—The enjoyments which virtue recommends are delicate, do not disturb the tranquillity of the mind, or disorder its affections; they are pure, sublime and unallayed by the bitterness of remorse.—Build then your happiness on this immoveable foundation, and you will have peace in your own heart, dignity in the world, a sweet and pleasing relish of existence, which will be not a little heightened by those bright and enlivening prospects which lie open to you in the distant scenes of futurity.—But I must leave you,

ADIEU.

